

SATURDAY

Gestures that changed the world

From Jarvis to Gazza

Magazine

Win Damon Hill's Renault Spider

See page 26 for token and entry form

Travolta: a big man is back

Weekend



THE INDEPENDENT

No. 2,930

9 MARCH 1996

50p

£20 off mortgages; high street sales healthy; house prices on an upward trend; jobless total falling; inflation record best for half a century, but...

Where's the feelgood factor?

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Britain's homeowners received a substantial boost as the Chancellor of the Exchequer reduced the cost of borrowing yesterday for the third time in four months. The cut triggered another salvo in the escalating mortgage price war.

Jubilant Tories with an eye on the general election predicted a return of the feelgood factor after the Chancellor cut base rates by a further quarter of 1 per cent, to 6 per cent.

Kenneth Clarke forecast a bumper year for business, insisting that running the economy properly was a key way of rallying public support behind the Conservatives.

His buoyancy underlined the

Government's optimism that the economy will turn out to be an electoral asset, thanks to a tide of helpful figures - a view backed by a Labour peer, the eminent economist Lord Desai.

The housing market has started showing signs of recovery, retail sales are climbing, unemployment is steadily declining and inflation has been lower for longer than at any time since 1948.

Mr Clarke is confident that he will be able to reap the benefits of low inflation and steady growth. But even if the headline numbers continue to be so favourable, which other economists still doubt, they will not necessarily deliver success in the polling booths.

A "feel-a-bit-better" factor, against a backdrop of job

insecurity and high levels of debt, of renewed decline in manufacturing and falling investment, is unlikely to translate into votes in the same way as "feel good" factor.

Yesterday's fall in home loan costs will help a bit. Britain's two biggest lenders, the Halifax and Abbey National, followed by others, swiftly announced mortgage rate cuts that will save borrowers between £7 and £20 a month on an average £50,000

loan.

There are more cuts to come. The Nationwide, which recently undercut most other lenders in order to demonstrate the

benefits of remaining a mutual society, said it would respond with a further reduction. Its 6.99 per cent variable mortgage rate remains below the rate of 7.24 per cent most societies announced yesterday.

Mr Clarke decided to cut base rates again because inflationary pressures have continued to recede. His chance came after the Bank of England said recently that the Government was likely to meet its 2.5 per cent inflation target.

The reduction yesterday morning, after the Chancellor's Thursday afternoon meeting with the Governor of the

Bank of England, Eddie George, looks at odds with recent signs that the housing market and consumer spending were already recovering. However, in a sign of the diverging fortunes of Britain's "dual" economy, the latest figures show manufacturing output in decline, a fall in investment spending by industry and a sharp slowdown in export growth.

Businesses therefore welcomed yesterday's cut in interest rates, with some immediately calling for another, if the economy's slowdown continued. Yet financial markets

were lukewarm about the move. Share prices dived after news of astonishingly strong job creation in the US last month destroyed widespread hopes that American interest rates would fall, helping sustain the downward trend here.

City analysts are divided between those who think the Chancellor will push base rates even lower regardless and those who fear he is engineering an upturn which will force him to increase them later this year.

Interviewed by ITN, Mr Clarke contradicted the economic forecasters who are arguing that interest rates will have to rise again later in the year - a development that could leave the Government leaning the election to the last possible date of May next year.

The Chancellor insisted: "Consumer spending is going to grow this year because we are going to have more money in their pockets, real money, not funny inflationary money, not money the economy cannot afford, money that's come because of all the measures that we have taken over the last three or four years."

He is right as far as this goes. But the Government can not expect much credit for narrow successes with some aspects of the economy when voters lack faith in the wider framework of its policies for jobs and industry.

Here is the dilemma for the Government: good news for the consumer is irrelevant in an atmosphere of industrial decline and job insecurity.

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Ministers to rebel on divorce Bill

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES
Political Correspondent

Three senior ministers are planning to vote against the two key planks in Lord Mackay's divorce reforms causing serious embarrassment to the Government over the already troubled proposals.

The two issues at the centre of the controversy are the introduction of the "no fault" divorce and a minimum 12-month cooling-off period.

A Government source said John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, Ann Widdecombe, Minister of State at the Home Office, and Michael Anstrum, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, were expected to oppose the Government when so-called "conscience" clauses on the two issues in the Family Law Bill reach the Commons. Such a high-profile protest would boost the opposition campaign, orchestrated by former Cabinet minister John Redwood and John Patten and a substantial section of the Tory backbench.

All three ministers have strong religious connections. Mr Gummer and Miss Widdecombe both left the Anglican Church to become Roman Catholics over the issue of women priests. Mr Anstrum attended Ampleforth College, the Catholic public school, and married a member of the Fitzalan Howard family headed by the country's leading establishment Catholic, the Duke of Norfolk.

The Bill, with its "no fault" clause and cut in the minimum waiting period for a divorce

from a possible five years to one, is set to begin its Commons stages before Easter. It still has to clear a Tory rebellion at Monday's Lords Third Reading, when Lady Young, the former Conservative minister, will press for a vote to increase the period of "reflection and consideration" from 12 months to 18.

In order to ensure that a coherent Bill emerges from the Commons, the Government is expected to adopt a procedure similar to that used during the 1990 Abortion Bill. That is likely to mean the Second and Third Readings are "whipped" - with Tory MPs being expected to vote with the Government. But free votes on issues of conscience, such as the retention of fault and the waiting time, would be taken on the floor of the House as part of the Bill's Committee Stage.

The device is calculated to enable the Government to get the Bill passed without being forced to rely on Labour during the principal stages. While Government business managers would hope for support throughout the entire "roll-call vote" from ministers and parliamentary private secretaries, the omens are not good.

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor who introduced the Bill, said yesterday: "I am concerned that any extension in this minimum period for obtaining a divorce may unnecessarily increase the trauma for children involved in the divorce process, for whom a year can seem a very long time." Lord Mackay has

come under severe attack from Government colleagues for insisting on bringing in the Bill.



Blooming marvellous: Arthur Ball, from Barnham Nurseries, Newton Abbot, Devon, unwrapping one of his *Cymbidium* hybrids for the annual orchid show which opens today at the Royal Horticultural Society Hall, Westminster

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

IN BRIEF

Help for Irish sent to US
The Irish government has promised more than 2,000 people sent as children to new homes in the United States between 1948 and 1962 help in contacting their natural parents

Page 8

Today's weather
Mainly dry and sunny after any early rain has cleared. Page 2

PETER VICTOR

Social workers left a 10-year-old girl in appalling conditions to care for her dying father, it was claimed yesterday. The child had been struggling to cope in horrendous conditions for weeks before social services acted.

The girl's plight only came to light when she told a children's home worker, Peggy Calder, what was happening when they met at a disco organised to raise funds for the home.

Ms Calder, 46, who works at a children's home in Skegness, Lincolnshire, decided to investigate and was appalled by what

she found. "I went to the house with her and I couldn't believe my eyes. I could have cried," she said. "I have never seen anything like it."

There was a dead guinea pig and a dead bird in their cages in the kitchen and there were hundreds of maggots in the bottoms of the cages. The house was knee-deep in all manner of things. You needed a gas mask.

"There were hundreds and hundreds of mouse droppings under the sink. She told me they had been having a lot of trouble with mice and she had been trying to trap them in the oven."

It was not until weeks later

that the child's 59-year-old fa-

ther was eventually admitted to hospital dying of lung cancer. The girl's parents were divorced seven years ago. Her mother, who knew nothing of her daughter's plight, is now re-married and living with her new family in Kent.

Ms Calder said the girl, who had scabies, was starving because her father, who gave up his factory job and was bedridden, was too ill to cook for her. "She told me she was doing her best but had run out of recipe ideas. That is from a 10-year-old. It was heartbreaking."

Ms Calder said she approached social services immediately but heard nothing

from them so over a week later she took matters into her own hands and escorted the child to the Skegness office. "Then they went to the house to offer some help but her father refused because he was scared she would be taken away in Kent."

"A social worker called later and told me they could do nothing because they couldn't go barging into people's houses where they weren't wanted."

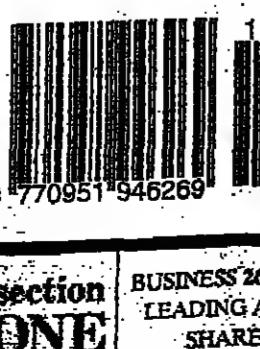
"But they didn't do nothing else after that. I went down a third time, but they didn't want to know. I was given an emergency number but I got absolutely nothing from that either." In the end, Ms Calder

phoned the police and arranged for an ambulance for the girl's father.

Lincolnshire Social Services area manager, Norman Pitcher, claimed social workers acted quickly to assist the family. "As soon as we were aware of the situation we attended and offered our services but they were refused," he said.

"But we are trying to work with the family as we always do rather than just stepping in and taking over."

The girl is now living at the Derbyshire Children's Home in Skegness and Ms Calder has begun legal proceedings to adopt her.



Girl, 10, found in squalor with dying father

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IN BRIEF**Baby death case
mother files home**

The British woman caught trying to smuggle the body of her dead baby out of the United States flew home yesterday. Caroline Beale, 32, was driven from Gatwick airport to a London hospital where she will receive a year's psychiatric treatment as part of the sentence imposed by a New York court on Monday.

Her return ends an 18-month ordeal which began when she was arrested at Kennedy Airport in September 1994 and charged with murder after her baby girl's body was found in a plastic bag under her coat. After eight months in jail and a further 10 months of legal wrangling she admitted manslaughter in a plea bargain.

Eurostar strike vote

Maintenance workers on Eurostar trains are being balloted on a proposal for 24-hour strikes in a dispute over performance related pay. Action by the 135 members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union could affect services through the Channel Tunnel.

£1m Newbury bill

The cost of policing the Newbury bypass site in Berkshire has passed £1m - £930,000 spent by Thames Valley police and £240,000 by their Hampshire colleagues. The site has been the scene of violent clashes as protesters try to stop work on the new road from going ahead.

Coma verdict delay

Judgment has been reserved in Scotland's first right-to-die case. A verdict is not expected for several weeks. Law Hospital in Lanarkshire wants to stop treating Janet Johnstone, 53, who has been in a coma for over four years. The Lord Advocate, Scotland's top law officer, argues it is asking a civil court to support a possible criminal act.

£23,000 spree

A residents' chairwoman who spent £23,000 of her neighbours' money on designer clothes was jailed for nine months. Anna Scally, 59, dressed in Dior and Armani bought with stolen and forged cheques from Lyndwood Close Residents Association in north east London. Shearwater Crown Court heard.

New Dulwich head

Dulwich College has appointed a new headmaster to replace Antony Verity, who resigned over allegations of sexual harassment of which he was subsequently cleared. Graham Able, 48, takes charge of the £6,000-a-year south London public school next January.

I'm Winnie, fly me

Sinatra Winifred Hastings is to spend her £10,000 life savings on a Concorde flight with 100 friends from her church in Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. Winnie, 86, who smokes 20 cigarettes a day and has no relatives, said: "I can't take it with me and I don't want to hand it over to the Government."

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Signs of**It's never****End of the road****Driving**

Clarke paves way for clash on referendum

DONALD MACINTYRE

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, yesterday cleared the way to a Cabinet showdown by showing no signs of giving up his fight to stop the Government promising a referendum before Britain joins a single currency.

The Chancellor's continued stand emerged as the anti-European Union Sir James Goldsmith, whose Referendum Party is posing a threat to the Tories in marginal seats, warned that such a referendum should be on more than a single currency – and should take place before or at the time of the next general election. Sir James also announced that his party would hold a full conference in October.

Mr Clarke said in at least two broadcast interviews yesterday that "nothing had been decided" in yesterday's Cabinet discussion which injected powerful – and now probably irresistible – momentum – into the campaign within Government to make a early commitment to a single currency referendum.

Mr Clarke's stand – backed at present by Michael Heseltine,

the Deputy Prime Minister – ensures a tough debate when the Cabinet discusses a Foreign Office paper on the mechanics of a referendum before Easter. But few ministers or senior MPs expect the pro-European Mr Clarke to seek to exercise a "veto" over the decision by threatening to resign in favour of a growing consensus in favour of a referendum.

That view was underlined yesterday when Sir Norman Fowler, an influential former senior Cabinet minister and party chairman, joined the calls for a referendum promise by declaring: "I do not think it is remotely possible for the single currency issue to be settled quietly and privately inside government." Sir Norman is a close friend of both Mr Major and Mr Clarke.

The Cabinet looks increasingly likely to approve a policy – sought by a majority of centre-right MPs as well as a limited number on the pro-European left – which would oblige the Cabinet to hold a plebiscite after deciding to join a single currency. Speaking after the EU

summit in Madrid in December Mr Major said that "if there were to be a referendum, the time for a referendum would be after the British Cabinet had decided that it wished to recommend going in and it would then seek an endorsement of that in a referendum."

But that still leaves open several questions – which will be addressed in the FCO paper – such as whether all ministers would have to take collective responsibility by campaigning for a single currency, and whether Parliament would be required to approve membership of the European Monetary Union before or after such a referendum.

Sir James, who announced yesterday that he had recruited more than 400 candidates to fight the next election, said his party had engaged MORI to do its opinion research, and had 18,500 "active supporters throughout the country".

He said the promise of a referendum should definitely go ahead and "should allow for a full debate on the sort of Europe of which Britain wanted to be a part".

'Brookside' chief predicts five-night week for soaps

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Every major soap opera on television will soon be broadcast five times a week, the creator of *Brookside*, Phil Redmond, predicted yesterday.

The millionaire producer warned that the sheer economics of competition would force the networks to dominate broadcasting with wall-to-wall *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Brookside* and *Emmerdale*.

Mr Redmond, 46, who owns Mersey Television, which makes *Brookside* and the teen soap *HolbyCity*, said: "I am quite sure

we will go to five nights. It is a financial decision for Channel 4 to make, but I would be extremely surprised if they did not."

Brookside has experimented with showing five nights a week, most recently last year when it did one-off specials covering the discovery of Trevor's body and the trial of Beth and Mandy. But a Channel 4 spokesman said there were no plans to extend the show. "There are several issues involved. One is the cost. But another is whether you can keep up the quality."

Industry insiders acknowledge the logic of showing the

major soaps every weekday night, but point out that *Crossroads* had to be cut back from five nights to raise its quality.

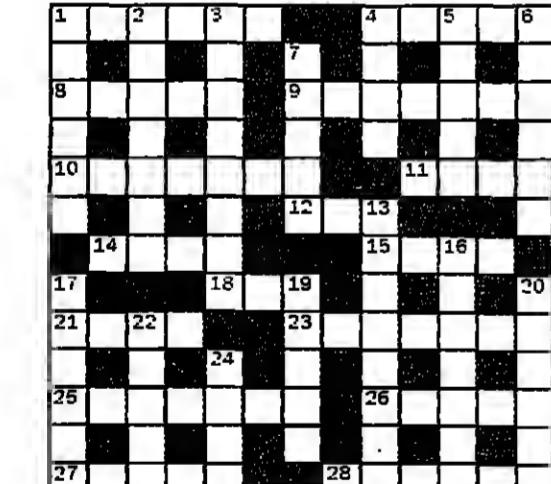
Coronation Street announced plans to go four nights a week last year, but with the fourth episode likely to be on Sunday.

Alan Yentob, controller of BBC1, has denied plans to extend *EastEnders*. But he added: "One can't be po-faced about this. Clearly those serials are of huge value to the audience."

Both *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* regularly attract 18 million viewers compared with a core *Brookside* audience of five to six million.

concise crossword

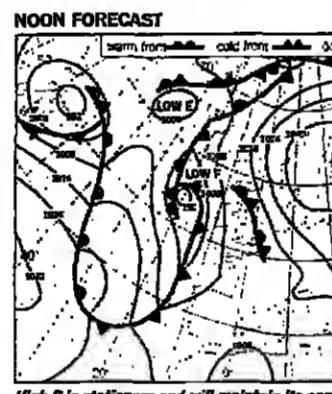
No. 2930 Saturday 9 March By Poma



Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
Across: 1 Londs, 4 Tor (Lodestar), 7 Eddy, 8 Birdlime, 9 Semi-detached, 10 Appeal, 13 Dabbie, 15 Book of bawdry, 19 Clamps, 20 Naif, 21 See, 22 Hatch Down, 1 Ladle, 2 Anytime, 3 Sable, 4 Tilt, 5 Remodel, 6 Errand, 11 Pebbles, 12 Loftah, 14 Bayonet, 16 Comic, 17 Beech, 18 Neigh, 23 Canning (b)

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weather

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IN BRIEF

Baby death case
Mother files home
Court rules

EU border strike
UK to Newbury
Eurostar strike
Drama ends

£100,000 spent
on building

The feelgood factor: Homeowners staying put as lack of job security blamed for continued property slump

Confidence still fragile in housing market

WILL BENNETT
and CLARE GARNER

Alex Centro finds it easier to sell less expensive properties in north and west London than he does those at the lower end of the market. Confidence among buyers with modest incomes is still very fragile.

Despite yesterday's cut in the interest rate - the third in the past four months - and last month's 0.9 per cent rise in house prices, many buyers are still too worried about job security to venture into the property market.

Mr Centro, sales manager for Oakleys estate agents, said: "It is not interest rates which are the problem, it is job security. People are not going to commit themselves to a 25-year mortgage when they have only got a job contract for one year."

"Things are improving slowly but surely. The top end of the market is going pretty well and we are looking for more property to sell at that end, while the less highly valued areas are more difficult."

Throughout the economy, the picture is one of a cautious recovery, with people being

choosy about what they buy and both families and businesses very wary of committing themselves to bigger outgoings.

Jonathan Bastable, of Burrough & Company, an estate agent in Newbury, Berkshire, said: "I don't think you can say interest rate cut, therefore improvement in the property market."

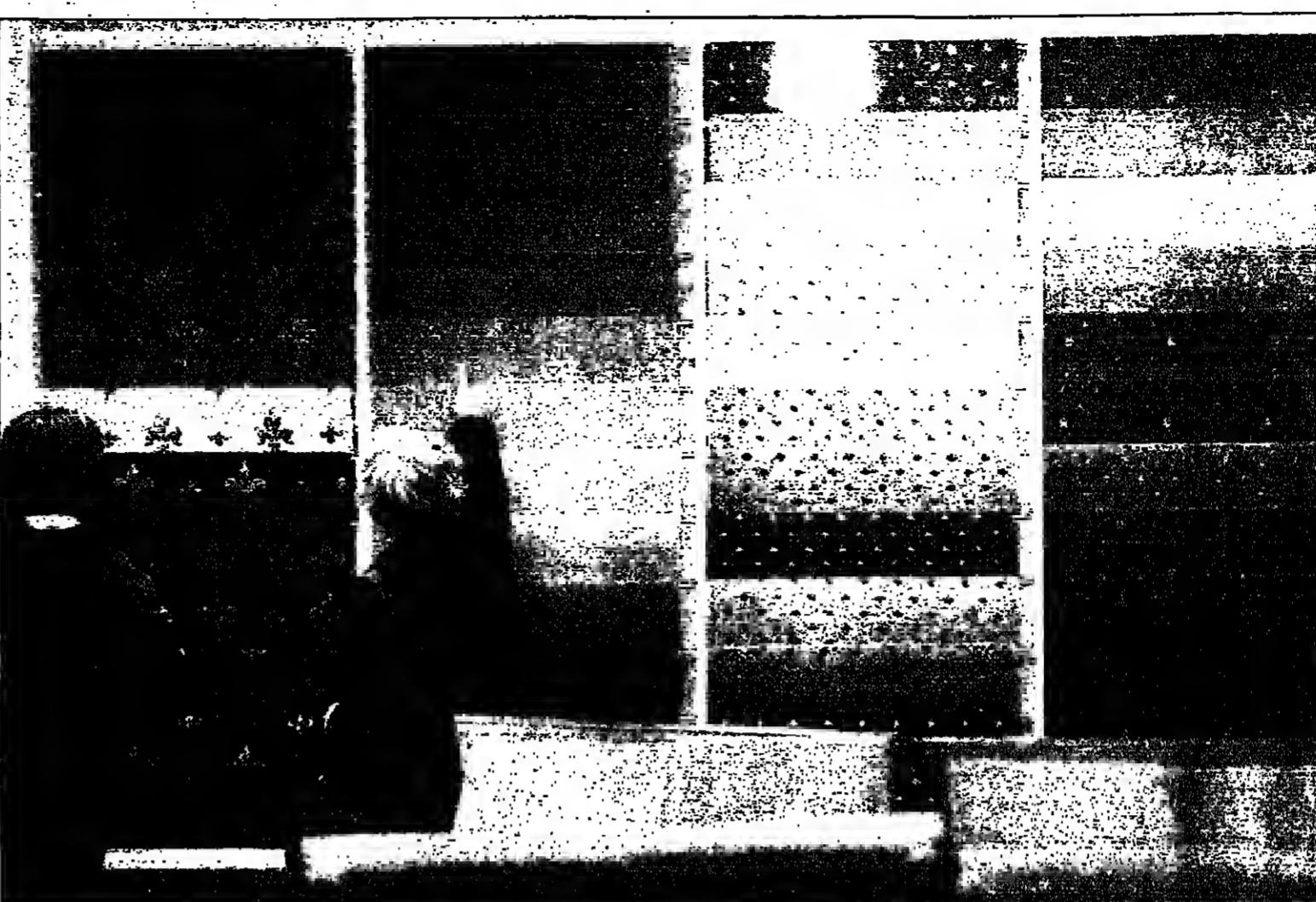
"But it will have a cumulative effect on property values and increase confidence."

"A quarter of 1 per cent off interest rates does not mean a dramatic difference, it is just a continuation of the general improvement in the market that has been going on around Newbury for 18 months to two years now."

A spokesman for Dixons, the electrical goods group, said: "The interest rate cut is not likely to have any immediate effect on sales."

"In the longer term it might stimulate sales if the housing market was to pick up. However, consumers are spending selectively and there is no evidence of a feelgood factor along the lines of that experienced in the 1980s."

The department store chain



Carpet-baggers: Shoppers in Peter Jones, London. Householders are choosing to invest in existing homes, rather than moving. Photograph: John Voss

John Lewis, which sells many household furnishings, reported a 9 per cent increase in sales last year and believes that that confidence is slowly starting to return to the High Street.

Stuart Hampshire, the company chairman, said: "The early years of this decade caused

us real pain as the property sector went into decline, but in this third year of profit growth we have felt distinct signs that customers are feeling more confidence and are getting back to investing in their homes."

"What we are seeing now is no repeat of the 1980s but the

property market does seem to be on the move again. Some people are finding it suits them well to take rented houses rather than buying ... and more people are able and willing to invest in their existing homes instead of moving."

But the rate cut was greeted

without much enthusiasm by shoppers yesterday. Carolyn Putter, a teacher and mother of two from Newbury, said: "I suppose it is a move in the right direction but I would think there have got to be more significant moves in the right direction for it to take effect."

"Quite honestly, I think the Government ought to go."

Signs of encouragement for optimistic Chancellor

Consumer spending has grown more slowly during the 1990s than at any time since before the First World War. Even during the depression of the 1930s there were years when people could increase their spending at a faster rate than they have during this "feel-bad" decade.

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke faces an uphill struggle to restore some feelgood to the economy before the general election. But there are signs of an improving housing market, whose collapse made a profound contribution to Britain's loss of economic morale.

There is growing evidence that the three reductions in the level of base rates since December combined with the mortgage price war have started to help the housing market recover. The rise in house prices last month was the biggest for

two years and the seventh in succession, the Halifax building society reported this week. For the first time since the beginning of 1995, house prices were higher than they had been a year earlier.

This followed reports of an increasing house sales and higher mortgage borrowing.

Up to a million and a half people remain trapped by negative equity thanks to the drop in house prices since the 1989 peak. But experts estimate that it would not take a big increase in prices to whittle these numbers away. Prices rising at an annual rate of 3-4 per cent would almost eliminate negative equity within two years.

Gary Marsh, chief economist at the Halifax, expected ex-

pectly this sort of steady recovery. "The housing market will not be like the 1980s but it will grow to a more even keel. A more stable economy makes for a more stable housing market," he said. But he adds that the psychological scars of the market's collapse will be only gradually erased.

There are those who believe Britain is poised for another boom. David Miles, Professor of Finance at Imperial College, London, argued: "The pent-up demand will be released as soon as people become convinced that we have gone past the bottom. There is a reasonable chance of a very powerful upswing in house prices."

However, it would come too late to help the Chancellor. "We could see a very strong 1997 and 1998," Prof Miles said. "Like the building society windfalls, it

will happen the other side of the election."

Share handouts from building societies - which will total about £15bn by the end of 1997 - are one reason most economists join Mr Clarke in predicting an increase in consumer spending. Consumers are also expected to spend some of the proceeds from maturing Tessas, estimated at around £45bn this year and next. The rebate on electricity bills and income tax cuts that take effect in April will be the icing on the cake.

There are already signs that spending is picking up. Official figures showed that retail sales volumes dipped in January, but trends are leading upwards. A CBI survey this week revealed firm sales on the high street in February, alongside a surge in optimism among retailers.

Most forecasts for 1996 pre-

dict that there will be enough of an increase in spending compared with last year to offset weakness in exports and investment, which were disappointing in late 1995. Although few are as optimistic as the Chancellor, most think the economy can grow at about its long run trend rate - or Mr Clarke's "sustainable rate".

The financial markets feel that further reductions in the cost of borrowing would involve running risks with inflation, so

improvement in spending looks good only by comparison with earlier weakness. "Cautious spending of windfalls does not make people feel good in the same way as solid increases in their incomes," he said. "Job insecurity will make it hard to engineer a return of the feel-good factor."

The financial markets feel that further reductions in the cost of borrowing would involve running risks with inflation, so

the Government may not be able to engineer a feelgood factor before the election. "If people feel good, Kenneth Clarke will have gone too far," said Geoffrey Dicks, a City economist at NatWest Markets. "It takes 20 per cent growth in house prices and huge increases in consumer spending to make us happy. If you have that kind of party there is always a hangover."

Diane Coyle

It's never been easier to borrow

CLIFFORD GERMAN
Personal Finance Editor

The steady downward pressure on interest rates has cut borrowing rates to their lowest levels in a quarter of a century. The main lenders have cut standard variable rates to 7.24 per cent, but borrowers can easily pick up loans at rates well below that.

Bradford & Bingley Direct, who offer mortgages over the phone, are already down to a standard variable rate of 6.25 per cent with no hidden extras to good credit risks. Scarborough Building Society is offering fixed-rate loans at 0.25 per cent for a year, and the Portman Building Society chipped in yesterday by offering fixed rates

of just 4.99 per cent until May 1998.

Cheap mortgages are good news for home-owners, but as base rates fall savers have seen their income from traditional savings halved in less than two

years. The Halifax were already offering savers just 2.75 per cent before tax on small sums of £500 in instant access deposits.

Investors willing to give 90 days notice to withdraw can go down as well as up.

Investors can still get 6 per cent tax-free by investing in Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) and up to 10 per cent tax-free in Corporate Bond PEPs, but there has to be a possibility that capital values on these investments can go down as well as up.

End of the road: AC Cobra and Renault Five to cease production

Driving off into the sunset . . .

PETER VICTOR
and MARY DEJEVSKY

Two motoring legends - the historic AC Car company and the Gallic Renault Five - were consigned to history yesterday.

The much-loved French runabout, which inspired a generation of hatchback cars, ceases production this summer after 24 years as the company's best seller. Surrey-based AC Cars, founded in 1901, and one of Britain's oldest car companies, will disappear into receivership. Accountants Price Waterhouse said it had been appointed administrative receivers to AC Cars and its parent company Autokraft Ltd.

AC Cars is based on the site of the former Brooklands race circuit near Weybridge in Surrey and has about 90 staff. It currently makes the £56,000 AC Ace.

A link-up with Texan millionaire Carroll Shelby led to the

creation of the first race-bred Cobra in the early 1960s. It was widely regarded by enthusiasts as the ultimate "muscle car"; its hooded snake badge, the last word in macho motorizing. According to legend, grown men screamed when exposed for the first time to its brute power and fierce acceleration.

So keen are enthusiasts to own the legendary car that several kit car manufacturers make replicas of the Cobra retailing at up to £40,000.

Current AC boss Brian An-

gus has taken over the business in 1986. A year later, car giant

Mike Geercke, one of the receivers said yesterday: "Produc-

tion is continuing while the receivers seek buyers for the business as a going concern. No one has been laid off and we are

confident that a strong partner can be found for the company."

By comparison the end of the Renault Five will inspire bittersweet memories rather than fanaticism. A last series of Fives, a limited run of 12,000 - named the 'Bye-bye' - will be the model's swan-song.

More than 9 million Fives have been sold since production began in 1972. It came into its own with the oil crisis subsequently acquiring the sleeker, more stylish lines that facilitated its graduation into 'le Car' and the 'Supercar', a design item of the Eighties.

Renault says the car is being phased out because it is outdated and no longer commercial. Since the replacement - the Twingo, darling of the Paris smart set - will not be sold here, British fans of the Five will have to be satisfied with the 'Bye-bye'.

The name has annoyed the French so much that there may be enough to go round.



Brute power: AC Cobra

Design item: Renault Five

Saddam Hussein has Fide chess men in cheque

WILLIAM HARTSTON
Chess Correspondent

After a year of negotiations and prevarication, the International Chess Federation (Fide) has found a sponsor for its world-championship match between Anatoly Karpov and Gata Kamsky. It will be in Baghdad, with President Saddam Hussein guaranteeing a \$2m (£1.3m) prize fund and performing the opening ceremony when the battle begins in June.

It brings new hope of recognition to a regime shattered by years of war, starved of international investment through its own internal conflicts and the unpredictable decisions of its autocratic leadership. Iraq has had problems too, but over recent years has been relatively peaceful compared with the world of chess.

Fide's problems came to a head in 1993 when Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short broke away to found the Professional Chess Association (PCA) and take their world title match away from Fide. This resulted in two rival championship contests, with Anatoly Karpov winning the Fide crown, while Kasparov took the PCA version. Both organisations found it increasingly difficult to attract and maintain sponsorship: Fide lacked the strongest player in the world, while the PCA lacked the official sanction of the world governing body.

In 1994, Fide's president, Florencio Campomanes, was re-elected on a platform promising to reunify the titles. A year later, however, he had neither delivered a peace treaty nor found an organiser for the Karpov-Kamsky world-title match.

In January, Campomanes was replaced by Kirsan Ilumjan, 33, the millionaire President of Kalmykia, an oil-rich republic within Russia. He has taken some extraordinary decisions, the most controversial of which, before the Baghdad bombshell, was to replace the three-year world-championship cycle and gladiatorial title matches with a single annual knock-out tournament lasting a couple of weeks.

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Since then, however, some MPs have compared her un-

Danger
sunny

MOTHER'S DAY
Spring a
surprise

Down to Earth: Rogue satellite will crash from the skies at midday on 12 March (give or take 18 hours), says amateur expert

Retired teacher solves Chinese space puzzle

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

A rogue Chinese satellite is expected to crash to Earth early next week, and some of the best people in the field are tracking its unpredictable downward spiral. They include the US Space Command, the European Space Agency (ESA), the UK Defence Research Agency and Geoffrey Perry, of course.

Judging by his track record, Mr Perry - a retired physics teacher now living in Cornwall - probably has the most accurate prediction for the satellite's eventual landing time. "Midday on the 12th of March [Tuesday], plus or minus 18 hours," he told *The Independent* yesterday. By contrast, ESA's latest official estimate is 4am on the 12th - plus or minus 24 hours.

Mr Perry's relies on long experience and superior techniques. He observes satellites at dusk, sitting in his garden with binoculars and a stopwatch, and listens in to their radio beeps from his home. Explaining his latest forecast, he said: "I get US radar data which is collected by Flyingdots. I take

the last six sets of data, fit a parabola to them, calculate the rate of decay, correct for the semi-annual variation, and add that to the date. Perfectly straightforward."

Mr Perry's experience predates the ESA, and spans more than 30 years. For much of that time he taught at Kettering Grammar School for Boys where he found the dawning of the space age provided a means of fascinating pupils - and of scooping the rest of the world.

In 1966, using £25 worth of radio equipment, he and his pupils noticed that some of the newly launched Soviet satellites had a different orbit from others. From that, they deduced that the Soviets were using a new launch site - a fact the USSR would only admit to publicly twenty years later.

In December 1973 they tracked the successful landing of Soyuz-13 and issued their data, which was precise and correct, to the world an hour before the Soviets. "Things like that fire kids' imaginations," he recalled yesterday at his home in Bude. "I remember one of them saying, 'It beats pouring iron filings over a magnet, or

putting hot rivets into a calorimeter.'"

The grammar school has since closed, but Mr Perry, now 68, has managed to keep alive

the principle of the "Keeting Group" - as it became known. A worldwide network of amateur observers have been in touch for years, swapping information by telephone, fax and now e-mail.

His inspirational methods also run in the family. His daughter is now the head of physics at Malvern Girls' School - encouraging pupils to follow

the satellite's downward path.

Star gazer: Geoffrey Perry uses scientific data, and a good old-fashioned pair of binoculars, to monitor the satellite from his home in Cornwall



Danger in the sunny skies

Nicholas Schoon
reports on the threat caused by the record holes in the ozone layer

Britain has received more harmful ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation this week than nature intended, thanks to man-made damage to the high altitude ozone layer.

The ozone, a gas made of three oxygen atoms, forms a protective shield against the UVB streaming towards the Earth in the Sun's rays. We know that high levels of UVB cause non-melanoma skin cancers and there is solid evidence UVB radiation can damage wild plants, crop plants and plankton in the sea - all of them at the base of food chains.

So mankind's damage to the tenuous ozone layer, caused by chlorofluorocarbons and other industrial compounds, actually allowing more UVB to reach the Earth's surface? And what harm is being done?

The answer to the first question is yes, but there is no clear answer to the second, so far. Fortunately, the worst ozone destruction seen to date takes place in places and at a time of the year when it is least likely to do damage - in the springs of both the southern and northern hemispheres and in the unpopulated polar regions.

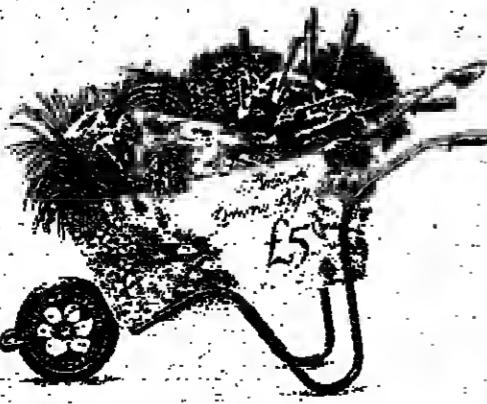
Nonetheless, University of California scientists have reported that in the Antarctic extra UVB pouring through its ozone hole knocks back the plankton. Ozone-depleted air has also drifted over the populated tip of South America.

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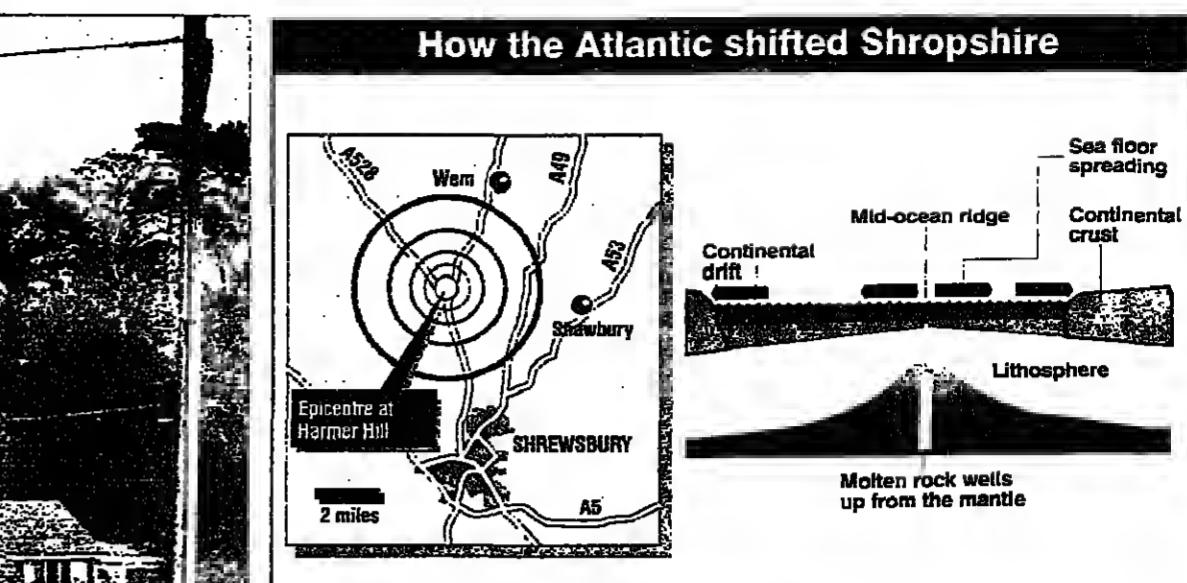
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Continents in collision: Shropshire village at the epicentre of earthquake as tectonic plates push Britain closer to Europe



Sismic event: Villagers in Harmer Hill were shaken from their slumbers by the tremor 11km below their homes



The Earth moves in Harmer Hill

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Eleven kilometres below the village of Harmer Hill, just north of Shrewsbury, the earth moved for the people of Shropshire at 11.41pm on Wednesday night.

The tremor, which measured 3.4 on the Richter scale, lasted for a couple of minutes and brought some worried residents

out of their homes and into the street in their nightclothes. But the energy released at the surface was so slight that, at worst, a few roof tiles may have toppled and perhaps some cracks appeared in walls.

With a reluctance that must have gratified the local Eurosceptic MP, Nicholas Budgen, the bowels of the Salopian earth were squeaking in protest as Britain is being physically forced away from North America into the arms of Europe. Down the middle of the Atlantic ocean runs a ridge, which is spreading outwards as molten rock wells up and creates new crust, pushing Britain away.

Because of the geological rather than political European movement, "Britain is under stress all the time" according to Dr David Booth, a seismologist with the British Geological Survey's Global Seismology Group in Edinburgh.

Most large earthquakes take place around the boundaries of the tectonic plates which make up the earth's crust. The notorious San Andreas fault in California, for example, represents the grinding collision between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate.

Although Britain is some distance from any plate boundaries, the effect of the ocean mid-floor spreading can be felt as far away as Shropshire. "We are not going to lose Shrewsbury, he said, although there may be minor aftershocks."

"A seismologist in California would fall about laughing when he saw the media attention given to an event of this magnitude."

But in a telling demonstration of current public anxiety, police switchboards were jammed by people who feared they were victims of an IRA bomb attack.

The result is that there are "20 to 30 felt events a year" - British earthquakes strong enough for people - rather than just delicate seismometers - to feel.

The Shropshire tremor, the largest in Britain for a year, follows quickly on the heels of the two biggest earthquakes in Britain this century - both of which were also in the same general area. The biggest British earthquake this century was centred on the Llwyn Peninsula in north Wales in July 1984. It was even deeper than this week's event, about 20 kilometres down, and registered 5.4 on the Richter scale.

In April 1990, the area was once again the epicentre of a sizeable, deep quake as a 20-second tremor, centred on Bishop's Castle, measured 5.1. Buildings across the West Midlands and the Black Country were evacuated and chimneys

toppled.

All three tremors were so deep that seismologists cannot identify the local faults in the earth's crust that gave rise to them, and they are not linked to any features - such as hills or valleys - on the surface, according to Dr Booth.

But the Shropshire tremor was "most unlikely to be the harbinger of a large destructive earthquake in that area". We are not going to lose Shrewsbury, he said, although there may be minor aftershocks.

"A seismologist in California would fall about laughing when he saw the media attention given to an event of this magnitude."

But in a telling demonstration of current public anxiety, police switchboards were jammed by people who feared they were victims of an IRA bomb attack.

Tremors that shook Britain

St Andrews, Fife, B11: earthquake said to have killed 1,400 people.

Colchester, 1884: most damaging known quake, which killed four people, damaged 1,200 homes and flattened a church.

North Wales, 1984: epicentre of the biggest quake in Britain this century, measuring 5.4 on the Richter Scale.

Wrexham, 1982: epicentre of 20-second tremor which measured 5.2. It caused buildings across the West Midlands and Black Country to be evacuated, toppled chimneys and caused structural damage.

Electronic cash 'purse' scheme

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

Electronic cash could become widespread in the UK from next year, after the credit card giant Visa confirmed it was talking to banks about introducing "electronic purses" to the high street.

Retailers warned that the new system would have to be both cheap and cause the minimum of disruption. But the news was seen as a welcome boost by those in the "electronic cash" industry, which has been gaining momentum in the past few years.

The "purses" would consist of a microchip embedded in a credit card-sized mount, known as a "stored value card". These store money in the form of encrypted electronic digits in the chip's memory, and can be used like cash to make purchases. The transaction is completed by swiping them through a card reader in a store, which transfers the "cash" to the store's computer.

Visa is understood to be talking to Barclays, Lloyds, the Halifax, Abbey National and a number of other high street banks. "Six members of the Visa consortium in the UK have asked to evaluate a stored value card programme," said a Visa spokesman yesterday.

"It's early days, but if they give the go-ahead we could

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UP TO 3 P

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A cystic fibrosis sufferer has scored a double first by becoming the first patient in Britain to undergo a lung transplant from a living donor - her father - and the first in the world to receive from a living donor - a family friend - who is unrelated to her.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust yesterday welcomed the pio-

neering surgery, saying it offered new hope to scores of sufferers whose chances of survival are limited by the shortage of lungs for transplant from dead donors. Up to 40 per cent of cystic fibrosis patients die on the waiting list.

Clare Wildman, 20, who needed oxygen 24 hours a day, now breathes almost normally after receiving lung tissue from her father Graham, 43, and Jude Harris, 40, a close

friend of her mother's. They each donated about a fifth of their lung tissue, comprising the lower left lobe of Mr Wildman's lung and the lower right of Mrs Harris's.

The six-hour operation, performed at Harefield Hospital in Middlesex by Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub, the world famous transplant surgeon, took place July last. He agreed to carry it out only after approval from independent ethical committees

at Harefield, and the Royal Brompton Hospital, and from the Department of Health.

The idea for the operation came from Ms Wildman's mother, Averil, who read about the success of similar ventures in America where about 20 such operations have been carried out. She intended to be a donor along with her husband, but her lung tissue was not a good match with her daughter's.

Other close family members were tested for compatibility with Ms Wildman, but were not considered suitable either. Her 16-year-old brother, Stephen, volunteered but the Wildmans thought he was too young.

Mrs Harris and her husband, from Hertfordshire, then offered themselves as donors as Ms Wildman's health deteriorated. Mrs Harris was the better match. "I didn't want Clare to die. I have two healthy daughters and I've known her

mother for 30 years, since we were nine years old. It is like we are related," Ms Wildman is now planning to go to college.

Professor Yacoub said the operation was possible because everyone has spare lung capacity, and because donated lung tissue will expand to fill the cavity. He told the *Daily Express*: "As doctors we are trained to treat patients and it goes against the grain to operate on someone who is normal ... But we

cannot overrule members of the community if they want something so much, so long as they understand the implications ..."

Dr Martin Scott from the Cystic Fibrosis Trust said yesterday: "The ability to use living donors for some CF patients is a major surgical advance and should help reduce the dreadful odds against survival."

Live donors are routinely used in kidney and liver transplants.

Idyll under threat: Dorrell intervenes to stop removal of village's red pillar and post box

Flying the flag earns scorn of social workers

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The Union Flag fluttering in a breeze, a shop, a red phone box and an old-fashioned pillar box. These may evoke a cosy image of rural Britain, along with cricket on the village green, but for one group of social services inspectors they were too much.

A handicapped centre in Cumbria, which had created this idyll for its residents, to make them feel secure and part of an often unfriendly country, was advised to remove these harmless symbols of village life. There was more. Down too, should come the names chosen by the centre for the bungalows in its grounds - names like, Peace, Love, Trust and Hope, but for one group of social services inspectors they were too much.

The ensuing row between Barrow & District Spastic & Handicapped Society, which runs The Croft home in Barrow-in-Furness, and Cumbria Social Services was part of a wider dispute which went all the way to Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health.

When Mr Dorrell intervened, in the words of Dennis Rose, the handicapped society chairman, there was "a dramatic change in the attitude" of the social workers. All the items which social services found unacceptable "were dropped,

namely, wrote Mr Rose, "hierarchy gone mad". The flag was a particularly sore point since he had served in the Second World War. "I am proud of the Union Flag and I wanted it flying prominently in the village - not least because it helps to acquaint people with learning difficulties about their flag and their country."

There was nothing sinister about the names for the bungalows, either. "Peace, Love, Trust and Hope are four very important words for handicapped people," said Mr Rose.

To create a village atmosphere, a flagpole was installed in the middle, with a payphone in a proper red box and a post box. A kiosk selling sweets, crisps and soft drinks was built, together with a communal meeting-cum-snooker room and TV lounge. The bungalows were given their innocuous names and the meeting room was named after Mr Rose's late wife, Teresa, who had herself been a driving force behind The Croft. Paid for by voluntary funds, it cost £850,000.

Late last year, social services paid an unannounced visit, said Mr Rose, and declared they "did not like the names, did not like the phone box, did not like the post box, did not like the flagpole and did not like the club house being named after my wife".

He admitted that Mr Dorrell was involved in "some discussions" but denied he forced a change of heart. In a joint statement last night, Cumbria Social Services and Mr Rose said any problems between them had been "resolved very amicably".



Sandy shore: Country and western fans at Llandudno, Gwynedd, where over 1,000 devotees are expected for the 2nd North Wales Country Music Festival this weekend at the North Wales Theatre

Photograph: Steve Peake

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international

Hardline clerics fail to find a niche in Iran's exclusive poll

ROBERT FISK
Tehran

On the Karaj expressway, the 20ft high posters yesterday urged Iranians to vote as an Islamic duty. "For the greatness of Islam, the continuation of reconstruction and the building of Iran," ran the legend beneath. "It's the first time I've seen the word Iran without 'Islamic Republic' printed in front of it." One of our taxi passengers announced, "Do you think this means something?"

It's that kind of election. The Council of Experts have vetted more than 3,000 candidates for their Islamic credentials, small parties have thrown in their hand before the poll and the two large groups contesting the parliamentary election have so much in common that several of their candidates have a foot in both camps. "You must know more about this election than we do," Mohamed Ali Sayas said yesterday at the Vanak polling station in north Tehran. If only we did.

But the poll, for all its shortcomings, in Western eyes at least, will probably decide next year's president. If the "Association of Militant Clergy" gains a majority, Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nouri, at present the Speaker of Parliament, will succeed Hashemi Rafsanjani as President of Iran. If the "Servants of Reconstruction" gain more seats, then either Vice-President Hassan Habibi or the Mayor of Tehran, Gholamreza Khabashi, will take office.

Yet the most fascinating aspect is that the real left-wing

clergy, who have always espoused the export of an Islamic revolution and played a role creating the Lebanese Hezbollah and other groups, are totally cut off from the political process. Mchdi Kharoubi and Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, whom the West love to hate, have no role, since their Islamic "credentials" were found wanting during the last parliamentary elections.

So at the moment when the US is urging the world to isolate Iran as a bastion of "international terrorism", the men supposedly responsible for this unhappy state of affairs are so isolated that former allies would yesterday not even furnish the *Independent* with their telephone numbers. American journalists trying to follow up US-Israeli accusations of "terrorism" against Iran are thus finding little proof if amid Iran's very exclusive election.

For the truth is that both the "Reconstructors" and the "Servants" are right-wing conservatives. The former may be more liberal on the Islamic dress code on women and the use of satellite dishes and the latter prefer a more Saudi-style code of conduct. But they both number the bazaars - the free-enterprise bourgeois who originally funded Khomeini's Islamic revolution - among their ranks.

The cry for world revolution and the domestically more important calls for social justice and the alleviation of poverty, which were previously the preserve of Mr Mohtashemi and his colleagues, have virtually dis-



Past master: An Iranian voting in Tehran yesterday as Ayatollah Khomeini, the late Islamic revolutionary leader, looks on. Photograph: Reuter

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Taiwan in dollar panic as Peking starts tests

TERESA POOLE

Peking

of America said it would fly in more notes on Monday to meet the shortage. Shops saw brisk sales of rice and staple foods.

The Taiwan government tried hard to calm people's nerves, and lambasted the mainland for its "crude threats". The Defence Minister, Chiang Ching-kuo, said the island would "fight" if there were an attack which violated its territorial waters.

"But the 12-nautical-mile does not represent our bottom line," he added.

Government support for the stock market meant it actually gained more than 1 per cent yesterday. The central bank, which has the world's second largest foreign reserves, said it would continue to bolster the local currency. President Lee appealed for calm, and continued his election campaigning.

China conducted two series of missile tests last year, following Mr Lee's US visit in June, but the present exercises are taking place much closer to Taiwan's coastline. There has been widespread concern that a misfired missile could land in



Lee Teng-hui: Tests aimed at denting his support

Taiwanese waters, or even on the island, triggering retaliation by "Taiwan" and a full-blown military conflict.

International condemnation was swift. In the most pointed gesture, Tokyo said it had sent a patrol boat to the area to secure the safety of navigation. The Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto said Peking's policy towards Taiwan was taking an "unfortunate direction".

The US said the tests were "provocative and reckless". In Washington, a State Department spokesman warned of unspecified "consequences" if the missiles went off course. The Defense Secretary, William Perry, said he and other White House officials protested strongly to Lin Huaqiu, foreign affairs director of China's state council.

"I believe the message we communicated was very clear and straightforward," Mr Perry said. He added that the aircraft carrier *Independence* was about 200 miles north-east of Taiwan and a cruiser and destroyer were nearby.



Summit shows 'solidarity' with Mid-East peace

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington:

The US wants next Wednesday's hastily arranged Middle East summit to produce "concrete measures" to counter terrorism and promote security across the region.

The Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, said yesterday the conference, in the Egyptian resort of Sharm-el-Sheikh on the Red Sea, would be co-chaired by President Bill Clinton and his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak. Among those attending will be King Hussein of Jordan, Yasser Arafat, President Boris Yeltsin of Russia and the leaders or senior representatives of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, and of the European Union — among them Jacques Chirac, the French President.

First suggested by Israel and Jordan in the wake of the recent suicide bombings in Israel, the idea of a conference was instantly seized upon by Washington, where Mr Christopher and senior aides have worked night and day this week to iron out the details. The aim, said the Secretary of State, was to create a "firebreak against the march of events in the Middle East". Washington was standing "shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel and other peace-makers in the region," to stop terrorism destroying the peace process. "Concrete steps," he predicted, "would come out of the meeting."

But it was not clear whether Syria, which has given at least moral support to Hamas and other anti-Israeli terrorist

groups, had even been invited to Sharm-el-Sheikh. Though Syrian officials yesterday again denied the country was a haven for terrorists, Damascus has yet to issue a direct condemnation of the bombings, and last week Israel broke off bilateral discussions here on a separate peace with Syria.

Experts said that with Syria absent, the chances of major practical moves against the terrorists were small, and unlikely to go much beyond the logistical help already sent to Israel by the US, and its pressure on neighbouring states to redouble their efforts to stamp out Hamas and other extremist groups.

But however slender the tangible results, the summit's symbolic importance is huge, as a show of support for the peace process, a ringing gesture of solidarity with Israel from former Arab foes, and a demonstration to Hamas that the terrorist group is isolated in the region.

The next day, as Mr Christopher begins a longer Middle East tour of his own, Mr Clinton will travel to Israel to underline his own sympathy with the horror, grief and outrage of the Jewish state at the four bombings in the last two weeks, which have claimed 61 lives.

White House officials hope that the physical presence of a US President in Israel will give a boost to the staggering Labour government of Shimon Peres, facing possible defeat in May's general election at the hands of Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party will have little truck with the peace process.

There are also domestic imperatives for Mr Clinton. With

the collapse of the IRA ceasefire, and now the bombings in Israel, two peace-making efforts that were among his biggest foreign policy achievements are tottering — just as the Presidential campaign heats up.

■ Beirut — Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hezbollah yesterday slammed the summit, Reuter reports. Hezbollah said the meeting would be "a practice of arrogant American hegemony over our region and a consecration of Israeli control over it". The organisation added that its guerrilla war to oust Israeli forces from south Lebanon and suicide attacks by Palestinian groups in Israel were justified as they "target an enemy occupying the homeland".

A woman mourns among the remains of the demolished West Bank home of Rayid Shamoni, said by the Israelis to have suicide-bombed a bus in Jerusalem on Sunday



international

UK holds out for Iran links

SARAH HELM
Palermo

Britain will today urge its European partners to reject American calls to sever diplomatic links with Iran over the latest Middle East violence, risking a US-European diplomatic rift.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, will warn EU foreign ministers, meeting in Palermo, against the risks of isolating Iran. A prime concern for Britain is the need to maintain ties with Tehran to pursue efforts to lift the fatwa against Salman Rushdie. While expressing concern over evidence that Tehran may be supporting Hamas, the group which perpetrated the latest bloodshed, Mr Rifkind will say there is no evidence of its direct financial or military support.

Refusal by the EU to end so-called "critical dialogue", a low-level form of diplomatic contact established between the EU and Iran, launched in 1992, would anger Washington, which is determined to find some new

response to Islamic militancy, and support Israel. The Israelis have long argued that Hamas is nurtured by Iran. Hamas leaders do not dispute their political allegiance to Iran but clear evidence that the movement is directly financed or armed by Iran has been hard to come by.

Critical dialogue is the only communication available to Britain to put diplomatic pressure on Iran to lift the death threat against Mr Rushdie. The fatwa, issued in 1989 after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, provoked Britain to cut diplomatic ties with Iran.

However, at the Edinburgh summit in 1992, it persuaded its EU partners to launch critical dialogue, which involves contacts between EU diplomats and Iranian officials in Tehran, dialogue, and occasional higher-level contacts.

Although the discussions have not brought real progress on the Rushdie question, the Foreign Office continues to argue that dialogue is a better course than isolation.

SARAJEVO DAYS

Battle fatigue sets in on the home front

They say that moving house is one of the most stressful experiences one can have — and I can confirm that it far outstrips living in a war zone.

In the four traumatic weeks since our landlord announced his intention to move back into his Sarajevo home (two bedroom office, sitting room with view of Serb trenches, kitchen, bathroom with running water most of the time, and garage) my household has swallowed in nostalgic memories of siege, shells and snipers. Life was so much simpler then.

For him it's just an attempt to escape the hideous reality of house-hunting in competition with hordes of foreigners arriving to rebuild Bosnia, refugees returning home and all the veteran correspondents, aid workers and political advisers being booted from the (cheap) places we had snapped up during the war.

It happened one night: my flat-mate, Stacy, who works for Newsweek, called on the last day of my holiday to announce our impending eviction. We railed and raged: how dare the landlord want to move back into his own house in this callous way?

Never mind, I said. I know the number of an estate agent who apparently finds houses immediately and then charges the landlord. It will be fine: now we can get a bigger house so that the various *Newsweek* correspondents and photographers who come through can have a spare bedroom rather than the sofa. This could be a blessing in disguise, I said.

Thirty-odd houses later, I'm in the new place, admiring the scarlet and orange shagpile carpeting the kitchen door, the electric-blue pile on the upstairs floor, thanking God that Stacy went on holiday this morning: she will need to gather her strength before facing the giant photographic *trompe l'oeil* (a woodland scene in autumn) decorating the stairwell. Even retro fashion hasn't become this Seventies yet. And the worst of it is we are only planning to spend two months here — it was a last resort to avoid imminent homelessness.

We had found the perfect flat (three bedrooms and an office, multiple balconies, white walls, wood floors, gracious living, no view of sniper nests, just in case, two garages) 24 hours before our eviction date. The sitting tenant had even agreed to

share with us for March and then move across the hall to a second, smaller flat. We were ecstatic for, oh, several minutes. Until a friend phoned to say that he was now being evicted from the smaller flat so that we could have the bigger place.

We decided there had been enough ethnic cleansing already, and that adding one cross-American and his Canadian flat-mate would be A Bad Thing.

The trouble here, when whining about house-hunting, is that all too many locals have had really stressful experiences: the new landlord's family in eastern Bosnia, for example. Dozens of relatives were expelled from their homes when the Serbs took Zvornik in 1992; they now live as refugees in Austria and Sweden.

And one cousin who fled to Srebrenica that summer was caught by the Bosnian Serbs and machine-gunned. In a huge group, he felt his father fall dead, then pulled his wife down with him. There the couple lay among the corpses. A soldier walked up and shot his wife in the head but he survived, playing dead. Once the soldiers had gone, he found a few other survivors and walked through enemy territory to safety. At least our rent money will fund a trip to see the son and daughter who fled the siege in 1994.

And the landlords — he's a Muslim, she's a Croat, very Sarajevo — are so nice that we should be able to cope with the inevitable, Yugoslav flaws that affect even the perfect flat: landlords in this part of the world believe that ownership gives them the right to wander in at will, every day or so, to check on the place. The lawyer renting the perfect flat on behalf of its owner, a Serb who moved to Belgrade, adopts this policy with zeal.

Still, he surely could not be as bad as my friend Chris's landlady in Zagreb: she used to pop in to do her ironing, cooking or washing every day. Eventually he cracked, and called her English-speaking son to try to resolve the issue. "I need to talk to you about the flat," Chris began in a purposeful tone. "Fine," replied the son. "I was planning to come by for a shower tonight after basketball so we'll chat then."

Emma Daly

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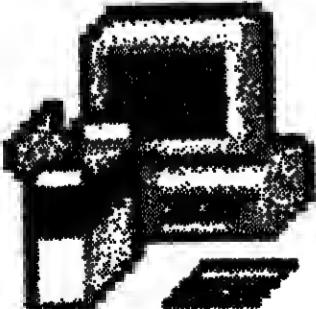


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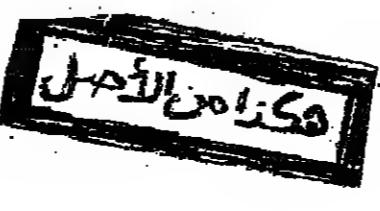


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Dole must ride Southern wave to White House

RUPERT CORNWELL
Jacksonville, Florida

Don Brewer's pride and joy is *The Chart*. It stands on the wall of his office here, plotting how in the space of 109 days last year, John Delaney rose from 3 per cent in the polls to be elected the first Republican mayor of Jacksonville since the Reconstruction era after the Civil War.

True, Mr Delaney had a little help: a split Democratic field, the city's capture of a brand new NFL franchise, the Jacksonville Jaguars, in which he was largely instrumental – and of course the enthusiasm and zeal of Mr Brewer, a local party chairman whose sheer love of the game of politics bubbles in every word he utters.

Not of course that Mr Delaney's stunning victory of 1995 has much direct bearing on the pre-ordained victory of Bob Dole on Tuesday in Florida when, barring an astounding reversal, he will scoop up the 98 delegates at stake in the presidential primary. At the present pace – and especially after Mr Dole won all 93 delegates in New York on Thursday, "Super Tuesday" is turning into "Superfluous Tuesday". Just another step in his progress towards coronation at the party convention in San Diego this August.

Lamar Alexander had made a big push here, but the former Tennessee Governor pulled out this week and threw his support behind Mr Dole. Steve Forbes's flat-tax message may stir some excitement in Florida's retiree community, and Pat Buchanan will doubtless pick up votes among born-again Christians and sundry right-wingers in these northern parts of Florida, rooted in old Dixie.

Indeed, Mr Buchanan's operation in Jacksonville last month provided one of the more bizarre incidents so far of Election '96, when it was revealed that his volunteer local organiser, Susan Lamb, was a follower of David Duke, Ku Klux Klanism, white su-

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS '96

But will that momentum last until November? In Florida, as across the country, thoughts are already turning to the general election. "It's time to put this thing to bed," Mr Dole told his New York victory party by satellite from a campaign stop in Tampa Bay/St Petersburg on Thursday evening. "If the others want to stay in, they should focus on Bill Clinton, not me. Let's move on to the big job of restoring conservative leadership to the White House." Which leads us back to Mayor John Delaney.

His election last May was yet more proof of the change that is redrawing the US political map – the secular shift of the South from Democrats to Republicans. Florida is one of the last hold-outs. The Republicans have a majority of the state senate and, Mr Brewer says, will capture the House of Representatives this autumn. But one of its senators is still a Democrat, and a brilliant 1994 campaign enabled Lawton Chiles to hang on as Governor.

This is the wave that Mr Dole must ride to win the White House. "The trouble is there's no enthusiasm for him," noted Mr Corrigan. "You can't establish a base here because the base is always moving." Florida, so much of it a glistening, transient Anywhere USA "is a restless place, always channel-surfing politically and socially." And therein lies Mr Clinton's opportunity.

Although Florida has voted Republican in every presidential election since 1980, Mr Chiles' win has Democrats this year hoping. All the more vital therefore for Republicans to consolidate their gains in the north of the state. But despite *The Chart*, Mr Brewer is a worried man.

Part stems from the sheer lack of excitement Mr Dole arouses, part from a failure to adjust after the conquest of Congress in 1994. "Our advance is not irreversible," Mr Brewer warned. "We still haven't learnt how to be a majority."

Dole profile, page 19

Mr Buchanan will hurt our party. The real question is why people like Ms Lamb are attracted to him."

So Mr Dole is, the man with the machine but no message – managing none the less to find a little something for everyone in this rootless state. Up here his conservatism and military record plays well. The senior citizens in their retirement communities see one of their own in a man of 72, while down south his fulminations against Fidel Castro please the Cuban-Americans in Miami. "In Florida especially," said Matt Corrigan, political scientist at North Florida University here, "momentum is everything, and right now Dole has it. I expect him to get 40 to 50 per cent."

Family affair: Steve Forbes with his daughters in New York where he pledged to stay in the race. Photograph: Reuter



TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

The ruling by a US federal appeals court declaring a constitutional right to die has "happily divided American doctors and set the scene for a painful national debate over the issue of assisted suicide."

The strongly worded decision was a virtual invitation to the Supreme Court to step into a thorny area of medical ethics that, like abortion, pits the sanctity of life against personal freedom of choice, legal experts said.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco declared on Wednesday that a mentally competent, terminally ill adult "has a strong liberty interest in choosing a dignified and humane death rather than being reduced at the end of his existence to a child-like state of helplessness, diapered, sedated, incompetent".

The ruling in a case involving three terminally ill patients, all of whom have since died, applies to nine western states from California to Alaska.

The court overturned local statutes banning assisted suicide and said doctors, pharmacists and family members who helped a patient to an early death were not to be prosecuted. Its decision came as a jury in Michigan yesterday debated the case of Dr Jack Kevorkian, the controversial figure known as "Dr Death" who has floated US laws by helping 27 people take their own lives. He faces up to four years in jail.

Though polls suggest a majority of US doctors favour legalising assisted suicide, the American Medical Association accepted the ruling, along with some churches. Right-to-life groups raised the spectre of bungled mercy killings and of people pushed into choosing death by the pressure of medical bills or impatient family members.

The Ninth Circuit has a long-standing reputation as one of the most liberal appeal courts in the country and has often been overruled by the Supreme Court. Washington state prosecutors, who brought the case, have 90 days to appeal.

international

Court supports right to die

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in THE
LIFE
OF A
MONK

DAY ONE.
Prayer, chanting and good works.

DAY TWO.
More prayer, chanting and good works.

DAY THREE.
More of the above.

DAY FOUR.
Ditto.

DAY FIVE.
More ditto.

DAY SIX.
Even more ditto.

DAY SEVEN.
At last! Arrival of the
Abbot's Ale

after 7 days fermentation.
Celebrate with prayer,
chanting and good works



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NEXT WINTER
NO PROBLEM

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obituaries / gazette

M. Krishnan

M. Krishnan was the biggest name in Indian wildlife photography. Without him several of India's wildlife sanctuaries would never have been set up and the conservation work of Operation Tiger would have been for the poorer in concept and design. Within the Indian Board of Wildlife his was the voice of the forest. Like the footprints of the *Elephas maximus* (the Indian elephant) that he photographed so extensively, Krishnan's stature will be measured now, after he has passed on.

The secret of Krishnan's success lay, of course, in the quality of his photographs. They were not slick, nor the kind that take your breath away, but they had a clarity, a purity; they were the closest thing to the original. The uncompromisingly accurate texts that accompanied his pictures, fortnight after fortnight, in the English-language newspaper the *Statesman* of Calcutta, were another triumph. His column "Country Notebook", begun in 1950, ran continuously for 45 years. The last entry appeared the day he died, making it the oldest surviving column in Indian journalism. It had a cult following, and was read by ecologists and lay readers alike for its accuracy and authenticity, and for the quality of his English prose.

Some of Krishnan's popular writings were put together in a fascinating book, *Jungle and Backyard* (1963, published in Britain in 1993 and still in print), which tells the story of a man who belongs to that margin of life where the human and animal worlds are not, after all, so separate. It is illustrated not by photographs but by ink-drawings. Krishnan was an extraordinarily gifted sketcher, and the book ranks with the best in English lay writing on nature, but without compromising his first principle: total accuracy of observation.

In the mid-1960s, Krishnan was given a Fellowship by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund to do an ecological mammalian survey of peninsular In-

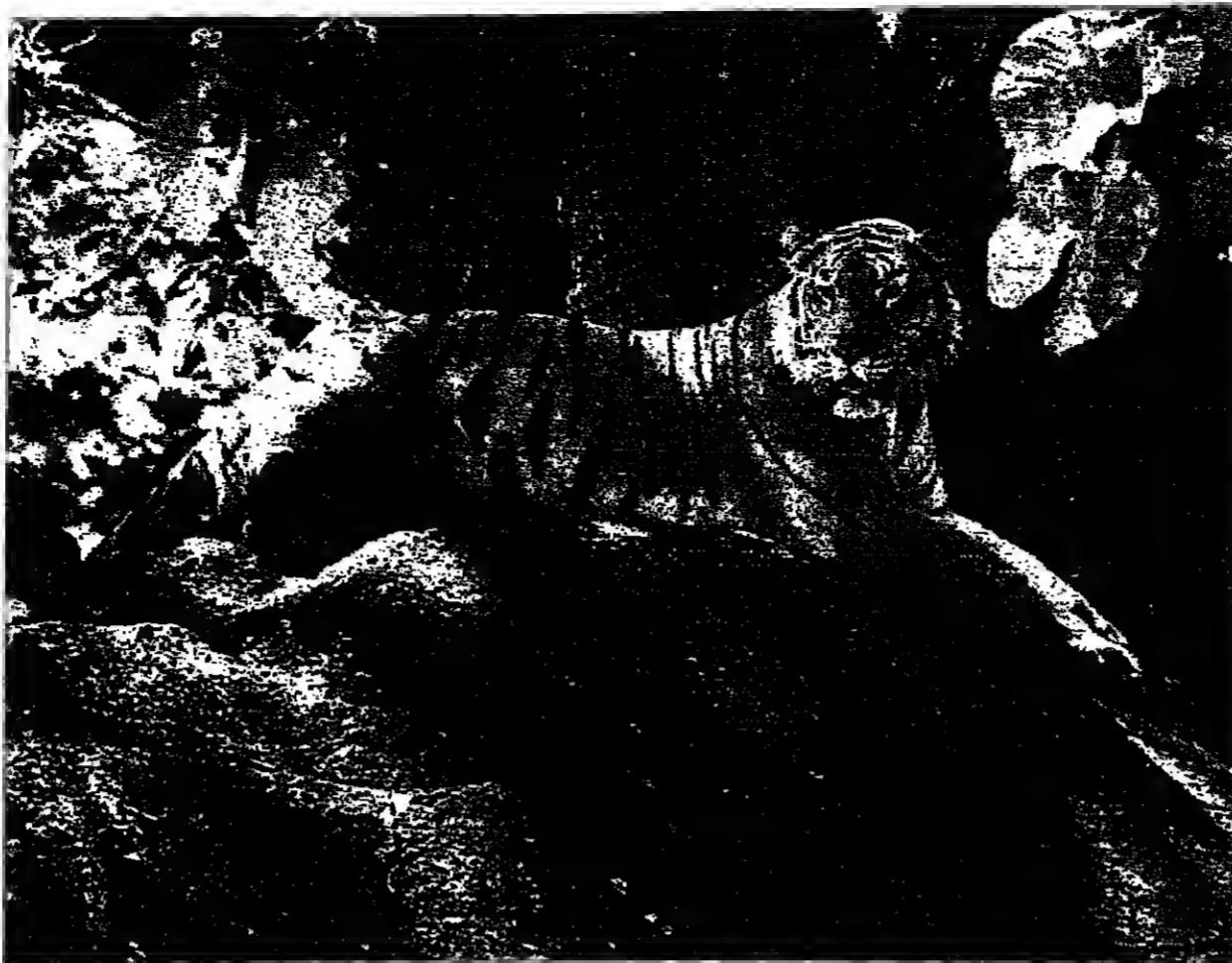
dia. He carried out the assignment with matchless skill, monumental patience and unremitting labour. His unique understanding of animal behaviour helped. Be it the *dhok* (wild dog) at Periyar (Kerala), the elephant in Mudumalai-Bandipur (Tamil Nadu-Kerala) or the tiger in Kanha (Madhya Pradesh), Krishnan understood. Blake-like, the immortal hand or eye that entitled him to frame its fearful symmetry. Describing how he photographed a digress from the top of an elephant at Kanha, he wrote:

I was positively anxious not to do anything that would spoil the impossible contrast lighting with the overhead sun casting patches of dense shade and brilliant highlights all over, presented quite sufficient photographic problems without the added one of the subject bolting. However, in an attempt to get her to raise her head and open her eyes fully, loud cracks made the tongue wagged. At last, even though the elephant was moved, the noise of its feet on the litter-strewn ground made her open her eyes partially, for visual confirmation of her hearing, and I was able to get her to raise her head and stare sleepily only by making the elephant shuffle its feet without moving.

His illustrated report *India's Wildlife* (1975) is a rigorously scientific document, perhaps the first and last of its kind to be produced in post-independent India. It is also Krishnan's *magnum opus*.

Krishnan's forest visits were frequent and seemingly interminable. He was away on one of his indefinite absences in a remote forest in 1970 when his wife, Indu, opened a telegram seeking Krishnan's willingness to receive the President of India's decoration of Padma Shri. Indu wired "his" acceptance at once; she knew her husband. He could take months returning or, equally likely, decline the honour as patronising. In fact, he rather appreciated the presidential gesture because national and international awards were the only kind of recognition he was likely to get; he was too proud to seek professional awards or enter contests, to lobby critics or the press.

Krishnan refused to accept,



The Tigress on the Rock, photograph by M. Krishnan. For Krishnan, nature always came before the art and science of photography

much less adapt to new technology. Modern technology outpaced his hand-assembled cameras; his developing and printing techniques seemed to belong to a bygone age. For him the function of the camera was to record without bias. His lenses were never in competition with the subject; for Krishnan, nature always came before the art and science of photography. Self-adjusting light and distance mechanisms, for him, were shortcomings unworthy of forests.

Even as younger and more successful cameramen whizzed from forest or "ethnac" site to exhibition venues in the western hemisphere, Krishnan's travel remained confined to where his subjects were – in the dappled forests of India. Except for field trips, he rarely left Madras, visiting Delhi a few times perhaps, and never once going abroad. Neither did he hold photo exhibitions nor publish "coffee-table" books. Krishnan could be short-sighted about the fast-spawning school

of "nature writers", pointing out their scant attention to detail. In his opinion, you had to know about the taxonomy, the morphology, the behavioural patterns, before you wrote or took "pitchers", as he called them.

Krishnan's camera took in the non-animal world too, although warily. He did some remarkable photography, in the mid-1970s, of the little-known immunoforms of Pudukkottai, a former princely state near the town of Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu. Using long exposures and no flash he captured the 12th-century fresco secco murals in the Jain cave at Sittanavasal for the *Pudukkottai District Gazetteer*. Krishnan knew that his photography of the fading Sittanavasal murals reproduced would be invaluable as a historical record, which is perhaps why he allowed me to photograph him operating his camera – a rare privilege.

Encouraged as a youth by his father (the novelist Madhaviah) to become a lawyer, Krishnan

did obtain the degree. But while this gave his no-nonsense mind an additional weapon to engage income-tax and other government agencies with, he never adopted the profession. He was a serious scholar of early Tamil, inheriting the skill from his father. He enjoyed quibbling over the two-looped as opposed to the three-looped "n" in that ancient script. More recently, he attempted writing a Tamil detective story.

Never guilty of underestimating his own exceptional talent, Krishnan nonetheless lived a life of self-imposed obscurity. When not in the forests, he hibernated in the hush cover of his home-cum-studio in Madras. Krishnan's reclusion was notorious. He would meet callers only if he approved of them; others ran the risk of being dismissed without ceremony. If you were among the lucky ones, Krishnan would emerge from his darkroom bare-chested, barefoot and in hole-too-fresh a lungi, to regale you for an hour or more with an acerbic monologue. Reference to some official's stonewalling of a forest project or the jejune writing of an ecological "specialist" would ignite the guru. "What do they know?" was a favourite riposte.

And generally Krishnan would be right. Even those who knew a great deal managed to lag behind Krishnan in knowledge of the field. The impaling of his *belle note* over, he would return to his studio, very much like the Indian porcupine he has described:

Apart from the noise made by the rattling of the hollow tail quills, when surprised the porcupine bristles out its body quills at once, with a swishing sound, suddenly growing large and indistinct; its gelaway is marked by sharply angled turns, and when it has put some distance between itself and what alarms it, the quills subside suddenly, so that the animal becomes much smaller, darker and harder to see.

Gopal Gandhi

Madhaviah Krishnan, wildlife photographer and writer, born 30 June 1912; married (one son); died Madras 18 February 1996.

Eric Briault

Eric Briault, geographer, athlete, conscientious objector and educator, will be remembered for his enormous contribution to the education service in London. For 20 years he was the Deputy Education Officer (1956-71) and then the Education Officer (1971-76), initially of the London County Council, then of its successor body, the Inner London Education Authority. He was a leading protagonist of the large comprehensive school as the solution to the problems of selection and the abolition of the 11 plus. He never ceased in his heart, a teacher – though he became a brilliant administrator.

Eric was a scholarship boy. He followed that route through grammar school in Brighton to Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he took a First in Geography and gained Blues as a middle-distance and cross-country runner. He then went straight into teaching, but continued his studies by working on land utilisation in Sussex, gaining a PhD in 1939. His interest in geography, especially field studies, remained. For 10 years (1953-63) he was honorary secretary of the Royal Geographical Society.

After 15 years' teaching, including a decade as Head of Geography at Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith, he was appointed Inspector of Geography with the LCC. That post carried with it the responsibility of the Royal Geographical Society.

He was fortunate with his politicians. In those days, public service in the great county education authorities attracted very committed and able people. London was no exception, and Eric Briault's name will always be coupled with those of (Sir) Ashley Brannah, Leader of the ILA from 1970, and the very knowledgeable group of senior politicians who worked with him. For a brief period, it seemed as though the formidable team of tough politicians united with the highly competent officers under Eric Briault's leadership could really transform the London education service for the benefit of those it sought to serve. It was not to be, though to many observers the fault seemed to lie across the road in the DES, and in Westminster, rather than in County Hall.

Throughout his life, Briault was a committed, practising Christian. His firm faith had led him to register as a conscientious objector in the Second World War, and Protestant Christian values underpinned all he sought to do. Even when he was "the Education Officer", his colleagues knew that only the most important and immediate matter would keep him away from weekly choir practice at his church in Harrow.

To many, he seemed on first meeting to be almost excessively reserved. But he was capable of great personal warmth. He and his wife Marie (who survived him by only six days) regularly entertained junior colleagues at their home; his human legacy is to be found in the many former members of ILA staff who will remember him with affection and respect.

John Bevan

Eric William Henry Briault, teacher and education officer, born London 24 December 1911; Inspector of Schools, LCC 1948-56; Deputy Education Officer, ILA 1956-71; Education Officer, ILA 1971-76; CBE 1976; Visiting Professor of Education, Sussex University 1977-81, 1984-5; married 1935 Marie Knight (died 1996; two sons, one daughter); died Burslach, Sussex 14 January 1996.

Minnie Pearl

"Humor is the least recorded but certainly one of the most important aspects of live country music." If this statement is in any way true, much of the credit lies with the woman on whose plaque in Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame it has been inscribed: Minnie Pearl.

For over half a century "Cousin" Minnie was among the most popular and beloved stars of Music City's WSM *Grand Ole Opry* radio show, and was one of a select group of performers able to lay claim to the status of "Nashville legend".

Strolling on to the *Opry* stage she would greet the audience with a shrill "Howdeel! I'm just so proud to be here!" before filling them in on her latest unsuccessful efforts to "keetch a feller". Her trademark was a wide-brimmed, bellflower straw hat, dangling a \$1.98 price-tag. Nashville lore has it she had forgotten to remove it on her debut and retained it afterwards for good luck. In fact she always made her own hats.

Born in 1912, Pearl always claimed to have come from Grinder's Switch, Tennessee, in reality a railroad junction town just outside Centerville, the home town of her alter ego and creator Sarah Ophelia Colley.

Passionately interested in vaudeville as a child, she studied stage technique at the exclusive Ward Belmont College, Nashville, graduating with a degree in speech and drama. From 1934 she worked for the Atlanta-based Wayne B. Sewell Co, directing amateur theatre productions throughout the region.

It was during this period that she began to develop her comic persona, observing and absorbing the characteristics and traits of people she encountered on her travels, notably those of an Alabama woman whom she always later cited as the original "Minnie Pearl". She auditioned in November 1940 for the famous radio barn dance *The Grand Ole Opry*, receiving a mere \$10. Invited back the following Sunday she joined the regular cast.

Her arrival on the *Opry* coincided with a sea-change in its talent line-up as it moved away from a reliance on old-time string bands like the Crook Brothers, towards a roster of solo stars, notably her friend and mentor Roy Acuff. In 1943 she joined Ernest Tubb, Pee Wee King and other *Opry* stars as part of the "Camel Caravan" which toured military bases entertaining the troops, and in 1947 performed in the first country show held at Carnegie Hall in New York.

At the end of the war, the comedian Rod Brasfield joined the *Opry* cast and although his somewhat risqué humour was at odds with Pearl's, they proved a popular double act until his death in 1958.

Despite her renown on radio and later television, Minnie Pearl never enjoyed much success as a singer. Although she cut sides for Everest, Starday and RCA – including "Papa

Loves Mambo", a delightfully awful duet with Grandpa Jones – she broke into the Top Ten only once with "Giddy Up Go Answer" (1966), a response to Red Sovine's 1965 chart-topper. Television, however, first through *Hee Haw* and then *The Nashville Network*, brought her monologues and corny jokes into the homes of millions of Americans. In 1975 she received the genre's highest accolade, election to the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Although latterly plagued by ill-health (she had a debilitating stroke in 1991), Pearl remained a revered figure; one whose example as the first major female star in country music was rightfully acknowledged by the generations of country women who have followed.

Paul Wadey

Sarah Ophelia Colley (Minnie Pearl), entertainer, born Centerville, Tennessee 25 October 1912; married 1947 Henry Cannon; died Nashville 4 March 1996.



Howdeel! I'm just so proud to be here! Photograph: Redfern

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

FOX, BENNETT: On 27 February, to Ruth and Phil Fox, a Mississ. baby girl, Kristin. A brother for Patrick and Thomas.

DEATHS

RACKHAM: Arthur, Peacefully at home after a long illness, aged 73 years, on 3 March 1996. Wine merchant, dearly loved husband of Gillian and dear father of Gillian, Pamela and James. Required mass at St Edmund's Church, Woking, Surrey, on Friday 14 March. Item, followed by a burial at Burleigh Cemetery, Hersham, at 11.30am. Family bows low. Donations if desired to Walton Community Hospital, c/o Mrs Caroline Stirkney, 29, St John's Avenue, in memory of Arthur Henry Rackham. Rodney Rose, Woking-on-Thames, Surrey KT2 3LB.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memoir services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam should be sent to the *Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LT, telephone 0171-293 2011, 24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 per line, VAT extra).

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **1st Battalion Irish Guards** mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Guard provided by the Grenadier Guards.

BIRTHDAYS
TODAY: Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin, Controller, Aircraft, Ministry of Defence, 56; Mr Bill Beaumont, broadcaster, and former rugby player, 44; Mr Andrew Bennett, MP, 57; Dr Michael Brock, former Warden, St George's House, Windsor Castle, 76; M. Andre Courreges, couturier, 73; Sir Roualeyn Cumming-Bruce, former Lord of Appeal, 84; Mr Bob Fischer, chess champion, 52; Mr John Goldring, trade union leader, 65; Maj-Gen John Groom, former director, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, 67; Mr Neil Hamilton MP, 47; Professor Sir Donald Harrison, tarantologist, 71; Dr Thomas Johnston, former Principal, Heriot-Watt University, 69; General Sir Frank King, 77; Sir Norman Lindop, 67; Sir Michael Montague, chairman, Montague Multinational Ltd, 64; Mr Graeme Odgers, chairman, Monarchs and Mermaids Foundation, 52; Sir Michael Spender, former chairman, Northumbrian Water, 68; Mr Peter Wormald, Registrar General for England and Wales, 60.

ANNIVERSARIES
TODAY: Births: Honore-Gabriel Riquet, Comte de Mirabeau, statesman, 1749; Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, composer, 1839; Ernest Bevin, statesman, 1881; Victoria Mary Sackville-West, novelist, 1929; Yuri Alexeievich Gagarin, astronaut, 1934. Deaths: David Rizzio, musician and secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, murdered 1566; Jules Mazarin, cardinal and statesman, 1661; Samuel Jebb, physician and scholar, 1772; Arnold Toynbee, social philosopher, 1883. On this day Pope Gregory VII declared all married Roman Catholic priests to be excommunicated, 1074; Napoleon Bonaparte married Josephine de Beauharnais, 1796; Louis Philippe of France founded the French Foreign Legion in Algeria, 1831; King George V laid the foundation stone of London County Hall, 1912. Today is the Feast Day of St Bosa, St Catherine of Bologna, St Dominic Savio, St Francis of Assisi, St Ignatius Loyola, St Isaac Pachas.

TOMORROW: Prince Edward, 32; Sir Laurence Airey, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 70; Sir Robert Bellinger, former Lord Mayor of London, 86; Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burnett, 83; Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 49; Baroness Falkender, former Private and Political Secretary to Lord Wilson of Rievaulx, 64; Mr Fou Tsong, pianist, 62; Sir Angus Fraser, former chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise, 68; Dame Margaret Fry, political organiser, 65; Rear-Admiral Sir John Garnier, private secretary to Princess Alexandra, 62; Sir Samuel Goldman, former senior civil servant, 84; Sir Charles Hardie, chartered accountant, 80; Mr Warren Hawkesley MP, 53; Mr Terry Holmes, rugby player, 53; Mr Hugh Johnson, wine writer, 57; General Sir John Learmonth, former Quarter Master General, Ministry of Defence, 62; Mr Anthony Lomond, Chief Constable, Humberside, 57; Mr Michael Montague, chairman, Montague Multinational Ltd, 64; Mr Graeme Odgers, chairman, Monarchs and Mermaids Foundation, 52; Sir Michael Spender, former chairman, Northumbrian Water, 68; Mr Peter Wormald, Registrar General for England and Wales, 60.

Royal Aero Club
The Duke of York, President, Royal Aero Club, presented the Club's annual awards at a reception held yesterday at St James's Palace. The Britannia Trophy was awarded to Mr Chris Rollings and Mr Chris Pullen, the Gold Medal to Ms Judy Ledden, and the Silver Medal to Mrs Diana Britton. Mr Frederick O. Marsh, Chairman, received the guests.

Few Supreme Governors of the Church of England have practised Anglicanism to the letter. Two sovereigns have not been Anglicans at all (the first two Georges were Lutherans), nor was a secret Roman Catholic (James II), the founder of Henry VIII. One was a practising homosexual (James I), several have been adulterers, and all of them, when north of the border, are Presbyterians.

This is not a record which suggests that personal adhesion to the church establishment's teachings has consistently been regarded as an essential requirement for the office of Supreme Governor. The fact is that the Church is built into the fabric of the Constitution: it is the body entrusted with the maintenance of spiritual truth and which serves as the reference for the moral foundations. When anyone asks what is the moral basis of the law in England, they can point towards this constitutional provision.

The link of Church and State is an historical survivor of the ancient confessional state; it is society continuing to uphold a belief that behind the fickleness of politicians, the easy manipulation of opinion, and the general shabbiness of public conceptions of truth and duty, there nevertheless resides a permanent reference to higher principles unaffected by the squalid natures of all of us.

Some people occupy posts which symbolise the historic vocation of society and preserve its formal structures for future generations. Their personal worthiness – indeed the worthiness of any of us for anything – scarcely comes into it. The State and the Constitution are taken to have permanent features which are untouched by the personal circumstances of their present guardians.

It may be, of course, that the time has come to revise or to destroy this provision. It may be that the pursuit of liberal freedoms and the existence of a pluralism of values within the intelligentsia and the governing élites – and perhaps even within wider society – is now such that the exclusive maintenance of the Christian religion, as the higher role of public association is outdated.

The Prince of Wales himself, in his suggestion that a future constitutional role might be broadened to embrace the defence of other faiths, has hinted at an adjustment. It is not actually a very likely one.

The only really serious philosophical difficulty with the State Church derives, not from unequal patronage, but from the existence of a link between government and religious opinion of any sort.

The idea of a future sovereign under-taking, in

The changing face of the British teenager

Come back, James Dean.
A survey shows the nation's young to be very, very boring.

**Paul Valley and
Glenda Cooper report**

Spot the teenager. Is he: a) the uncouth slob who leaps on stage and disrupts Michael Jackson's show at the Brit awards ceremony?

Or is he: b) the timid creature, still at home after finishing all his/her homework, afraid to go out because they have already been a victim of crime, with no urge to get involved in political street demos or even to read the newspaper?

No prizes for guessing. Once, of course, it would have been the rebellious youth who was involved in disruption and demonstration. But today's teenagers leave that kind of thing to their elders. It is the thirtysomething Jarvis Cocker, not younger stars, who decided to have a go at the posturing superstar. The teenage bands behaved impeccably.

This is the pattern for our age, according to the first comprehensive Young People's Social Attitudes survey, produced by the research organisation behind the definitive British Social Attitudes annual survey. The Fifteen Rebel Without a Cause model is long gone. So is the politicised being of the Sixties who had more causes than he or she generally knew what to do with. Gone too is the wild posturing creature of the Seventies and even the environmental iconoclasts of the Eighties with their rebellion against the materialism of the Thatcher era.

The new report, sponsored by the children's charity Barnardo's depicts a very different picture of adolescence. The teenager as rebel is no more. Radicalism is a luxury only the

more affluent twentysomethings can afford.

Teenagers were invented by the Fifties on the post-war economic boom. Since then, each teen generation has striven hard to keep up the rebel image, finding its most recent fulfilment in the apathy and nihilism of grungy Kurt Cobain followers who characterised themselves as Generation X.

There was an attempt to dis-

cove what might follow last year when the think-tank Demos came up with Generation Y in a survey to discern the attitudes of the group who would follow them. But yesterday's massive survey of 12 to 19-year-olds reveals something rather different. Instead of Generation Y we have Generation Zzzz.

Rather than striking out in a new direction of their own, today's teenagers are characterised by a lack of interest in anything outside the parameters circumscribed by the need to get a job. So they are keen on education, with just under half believing that formal exams are the best way of judging ability.

Far from subscribing to the celebrated axiom of hippie youth - "never trust anyone over 30" - today's teenagers are rather keen on taking the advice of their parents, even preferring to leave it to the adults to decide at what age sex education classes should be be-

Rather than hoping they die before they get old, these children tend rather to agree with their parents - 66 per cent believe in the death penalty,



1966

Clothes: Carnaby Street, mini-skirts, leathers, Mary Quant make-up, Parka jackets, suede boots, granny glasses, Ben Sherman button-down shirts.

Musics: The Beatles, Stones, Kinks, Small Faces, Bonzo Dog Do-Do Band, Dylan goes electric.

Drugs: Cider, rum and black cigarettes.

Attitudes: Sex and drugs almost universally restricted to song lyrics and underground magazines. Working up to student radicalism. Anti-nuclear. Turn on, drop out, revolution.

Entertainment: Crossover Man's Cultural Revolution. Radio Caroline, Bobbie Moore and Bobby Charlton, the space race, US space race.

1976

Clothes: London, faxes (still), platform shoes, mock tops, torn turn-ups (Bay City Roller rockabilly), ripped T-shirts and black bin-enders, bondage trousers. Hair - too much.

Musics: Bee Gees, Roxy Music, Bowie, Northern Soul, glam rock, Bob Marley, Lou Reed, punk.

Drugs: Glue, speed.

Attitudes: Cynicism replaces Sixties optimism but with more focused hopes - Rock Against Racism, Women's Movement, etc.

Entertainment: Icons Kevin Keegan, the Sex Pistols, skateboards and safety pins.

1986

Clothes: Frankie Says T-shirts, leggings, pastel bell skirts, matching denim, stilettos, blue mascara, frosted lipsticks, Don McLean.

Musics: The Peel sessions, The Smiths, Cars, Duran Duran, Wham!, The League, Stop Boys, Eurythmics, Human League, Depeche Mode, cocaine, money, heroin (Screws You Up; Just Say No).

Attitudes: Choose from: a. Miners' strike radicalism, Rock Against Thatcher;

b. Thatcherism, consumerism, "The Me Generation";

c. Sex, violence, Live Aid, AIDS ("Don't Die of Ignorance"), Gary Numan, Orange Hill, video games, the smartass TV ad, ghetto blasters/raza blasters/bomb boxes, BMX, VW logo badges.

1996

Clothes: Hottest new trends: two-piece, Converse All Stars, Puffa jackets, tweed, Seventies retro, flares, acid-wash, patchwork denim, t-shirt trousers, Daniel Pool.

Musics: Public Image Ltd, Boy George, Thriller, jungle and ambient, techno and house, Supergrass.

Drugs: Ecstasy, Prozac, speed, crystal cocaine, heroin, marijuanna, weed and hash, Packer, amphetamine, ecstasy and weight cocktails for various points through the night.

Attitudes: Hard-working, politically conservative, nervous of the future, Millennium, John Major, Tony Blair, New Labour issue, fast food, tree-huggers, etc.

Entertainment: Mr Cooly, the Internet, television and PC games, millennium, Tony O'Sullivan, Jessie Cocker, media studies.

and although more likely than their parents to think first-time offenders should do community service, 60 per cent believe that sending more people to prison would help reduce crime.

They are anxious not to rock many boat - they think the age of consent for sex should remain at 16 and that for marriage to be raised to 18. They do not want the age of suffrage or alcohol/drinking to be lowered. Contrary to the common perception, 70 per cent of teenagers do not smoke, 80 per cent do not go to discos, 40 per cent take a bath or shower

every day, and according to a survey by the Exeter University School of Education Unit, 80 per cent of boys even brush their teeth twice a day. Malcontents or what?

"We're looking at a generation that has grown up with large social change, the disintegration of their homeland, fracturing families where mum lives in one place and dad in another," says Tony Newman, one of the sociologists behind the survey. "They've had to grow up quite quickly, and they've seen what's gone wrong with adults. I wouldn't call

them boring, but they are certainly more mature."

The myth of the dangerously out-of-control teenager comes up against the reality that 82 per cent of young people say that they have been victims rather than perpetrators of crime.

There are those who would invert the usual causal logic here. Tom Watkins, who used to manage the pop duo Bros and now manages East 17, blames boring pop music for creating a boring generation.

"There is so much dreary guitar music around and stuff

sounding like the Beatles - it's no wonder that teenagers are dreary," he says. "Teenagers are waiting for someone. Everything is so bland at the moment, but if there was a new Johnny Rotten, teenagers would follow him. You've got to have something to kick against. If inscription was introduced, people would rise up."

Don't you believe it. What yesterday's poll shows is a disinclination against action on a monumental scale.

Only on questions of sexual relations do they show no sign of revisionism. Most accept

cohabitation both as a substitute and as a preparation for marriage. Few agree a bad marriage is better than none and about half consider a single-parent family can do as well as a two-parent one, although the proportion of women (66 per cent) who feel this way far outweighs the 45 per cent of young men who consider one parent is as good as two.

Boys are, however, twice as likely as girls to believe that a man's job is to earn money and a woman's job is to look after home and family. Some things, it seems, never change.

Young women have more opportunity to get jobs these days than young men. - Melissa, 14, Liverpool

Gender

I think both men and women should go out to work. And I like cooking myself. But I'll never be caught doing the washing up. - Jamie, 16

The justice system and the police judge totally on appearances. - Angela, 18

What the poll shows today's teenagers really think

Education
57 per cent worry about getting a job after their studies.
80 per cent think secondary school exam results should be published.

Only 37 per cent think children aged 11 and under should have sex education at school.

82 per cent report bullying at school.

69 per cent think that people who keep on bringing drugs into school should be expelled or suspended.

Rights
The legal minimum age limits should not be changed regarding having sex, buying alcohol, voting, driving a car and leaving school.

The legal age for marriage should be raised to 18.

93 per cent of young people believe parents should have a say in what is taught in schools.

Politics
59 per cent of young people have no interest in politics.

Only 21 per cent said they supported a political party.

45 per cent read a daily newspaper three times a week.

Religion and morality
55 per cent of young people believe in God.

72 per cent said that if they found a £100 note in the street they would hand it in to the police.

Crime
82 per cent of young people have been the victims of crime.
77 per cent think reducing poverty is effective in crime prevention.

78 per cent feel that greater discipline in schools and families would also help to reduce crime.

64 per cent feel that a poor person is more likely to be found guilty for a crime they did not commit than a rich person.

66 per cent support the death penalty.

Race
Nine out of 10 young people think a black person is more likely than a white person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit.

African Caribbeans
28 per cent of young people admit to some degree of racial prejudice. [The figure for adults is 36 per cent.]

More girls than boys think there is a lot of prejudice against Asians (57 per cent against 45 per cent) and against African Caribbeans (44 per cent against 36 per cent].

Two-thirds of young people think that Asians and West Indians suffer discrimination in trying to get a job.

44 per cent of young people think a black person is more likely than a white person to be found guilty of a crime they did not commit.

Family Life
82 per cent of young women and 78 per cent of young men believe it is fine for people to live together without getting married.

Four out of five believe it is a good idea to live together before getting married.

66 per cent of young women think one parent can bring up a child as well as two, compared with 45 per cent of young men.

Gender Issues
Young people disagree with the assumption that men should go out to work and women stay at home; significantly more men (69 per cent) than women (57 per cent) men

reject this model.

47 per cent of young men and 42 per cent of young women believe family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work.

Six out of 10 young people think that having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.

Jobs most appropriate for a man or a woman are GPs, MPs or bank managers.

Young women's main ambitions are [in order] to be happy to have a good job and to be successful at work.

Young men's are to be happy, to be well off and to have a good job.

I have opinions on politics but I'm not anxious to vote before I'm 18. A lot of my friends aren't really interested. At the moment we just want to have a good time; after 18 you have to settle down. - Jamie, 16

The justice system and the police judge totally on appearances. - Angela, 18

Jo Brand's week

What a surprise to find out that the first recipient of a squirt of CS gas in the mush, courtesy of the boys in blue, was a rogue rugby player. The police must have breathed a sigh of relief when they remembered they had a chemical cosh on board to help them tackle man-mountain. I recall, when I was a psychiatric nurse, the odd occasion when we were attempting to deal with a very frightening drunkard who had decided to stagger in and pay us a visit - we could have done with something similar. In fact, I could do with something like that now and again these days when I have to walk through dark, uncharted territory late at night. However, CS gas is illegal for us mortals. But now the police have got it, when are they going to let us women have it, too? Some of us would be able to get out more and I doubt we'd be trigger-happy as some hicks.

We women can't get CS gas, but if you're a country that tortures your citizens, it's not too difficult to buy what you need in Britain. The Channel 4 programme *Dispatches* revealed how a company in Britain is secretly selling electric shock batons, which can be used for torture, to dodgy countries, despite the fact that an official statement to Amnesty International denied this was the case. The manufacture of leg irons was banned in this country, too, so another company, Hiatt, very cleverly got round this by making big handcuffs and sending them to America for the chain to be extended. What is the Government's part in this? It's employing its usual skill of looking the other way. Still, after the Scott report, I'm sure it isn't intentional.

Some letters are due to go up for auction soon that will show our great heroine Florence Nightingale (right) in a rather miffing light. The Lady Lamp, according to these letters, was a bit of an interfering pain in the neck. So says a Major Ward, who wrote many letters home during the Crimean War. When Florence Nightingale arrived at Scutari Hospital, she discovered it

was built over a cesspool and that soiled, infected linen was washed in cold water. The soldiers didn't want her to poke her nose in, as they thought things were all right as they were. Well, you know men and hygiene. It probably reminded most of them of the barracks at home.

I had to sympathise with the secretary who got stuck in a lift for 21 hours this week. I'm not a big fan of lifts myself. Not bad enough to actually use the stairs, but I do hold my breath in them and work out strategies in my head, in case they get stuck. Normally, if a lift breaks down, you press a button and someone arrives within minutes to haul you out, or, if you believe in advent fantasy land, there is a good-looking bloke in there with you to offer you a bit of chewing-gum (great). However, 21 hours, and overnight at that, is not the stuff that fantasy is made of. This poor woman was alone in an empty building, where no one can hear you scream. Meanwhile, her husband was going bonkers trying to find her. The weirdest thing was that the woman in question wanted to get straight back to work. Now if there was ever a good reason for a couple of days off, I think this must be it.

I do feel women do themselves a disservice by railing against the looks of other women, given that we are judged harshly enough by men as it is. The tennis player Thomas Muster

Maybe Thomas Muster's deserted girlfriend should take a leaf out of the book of the Pittsburgh lawyer who sent a man to prison for five to 10 years because he was dating the defendant's girlfriend and wanted to get rid of the competition. The case will be retried. Reassuring to know love can't quite conquer everything.

Hurrah, the Government is planning to remove employment rights from people who work for small businesses. What a huge surprise that. Considering that small outfits are virtually the only businesses that have survived the shambles that passes for economic policy, they've got us by the short and curlies. Workhouse next, chaps.

If Cliff Richard wants to play Heathcliff in a musical, so what? At least he's indulging a fairly harmless fantasy, compared with the Messianic aspirations of the completely barking Mr Jackson. I'd rather go with a goody wanting to play a bad boy than a rather sad isolated friend of the chimp convincing himself he is the ultimate good boy. After all, it is supposed to be "acting" and if people go to see Cliff in droves good for them. I hope they enjoy it. I have to confess I'm not a Cliff fan, but I wouldn't imagine he gets much out of my act, either. I'm sure if Sharon (no smalls) Stone announced she was going to star in *The Nun's Story*, there wouldn't be half the fuss. Besides, there are much better things to sneer at, like Garry Bushell using his TV review programme to show his own excruciating appearance on *An Audience with Freddie Starr* one more time. Oh joy. Perhaps it's time to wave goodbye to Garry, as he seems in danger of disappearing up his own rectum. No doubt he'll sell the TV rights to that, too.



Thomas Muster: double trouble

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The Tories should be worried about job insecurity

At last there is something tangible to celebrate from the upturn in the economy. With yesterday's fall in interest rates - the third cut in four months - more people, not just shareholders and fat-cat executives, are beginning to feel better off. Mortgages will be cheaper after yesterday's news - by up to £20 a month on an average mortgage. Retail sales, reflecting consumer confidence, are well up. House prices have now been rising steadily since the summer, chipping away at negative equity. Meanwhile, income tax cuts due in April will bring gains from building societies turning into banks and the release of funds from maturing Tessas are all leading to an increased sense of well-being. There are some losers, Savers, notably elderly people, may be worried by the decline in interest rates, but many continue to benefit from a low-inflation economy.

All this fresh confidence means that the 3 per cent growth sought by Kenneth Clarke but generally thought unachievable a few months ago might just be attainable. It may not be the balanced growth - divided between exports and domestic demand - that the Chancellor has proclaimed so proudly. Expansion is shifting more toward a conventional type of British growth, fuelled by consumer spending - export performance has deteriorated and with it prospects for manufacturing. In short, the economy is behaving as it typically does during the year before a general election.

Nevertheless, inflation remains a distant fear. Mr Clarke can reasonably expect to meet his inflation targets; hence the Bank of England's willingness to cut interest rates again. And the unex-

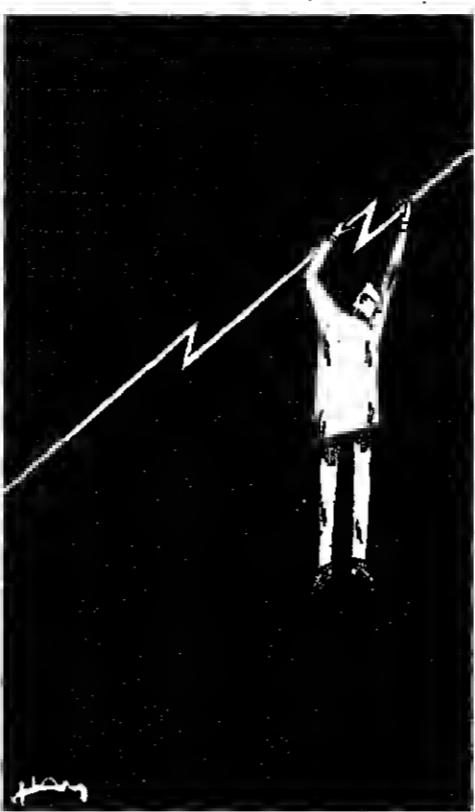
pectedly lengthy period - 29 months on the run - in which unemployment has fallen demonstrates that growth has yet to create the wage pressures which traditionally price people out of work.

All of this augurs well for a government that hopes to hang on to its wafer-thin parliamentary majority for long enough to reap the political dividend of economic growth. As Lord Desai, the Labour peer, said yesterday: "The economy will not be the weak spot of the Tories that we thought it could be." In the short term, at least, the "feel-good factor", that elusive elixir of the Eighties, may be about to return.

But it would be a mistake to think that this pleasant stage in the economic cycle is an answer to the more long-term structural difficulties that will still be with us long after the mortgage-rate cutting party has ended.

Job insecurity is, and will continue to be, a dominant feature of British life. There is, behind the economic upturn, a change going on in the structure of our working lives that is comparable with the Industrial Revolution. A report published yesterday by Business Strategies, a leading consultancy, tells the story - within 10 years, it expects nearly half the workforce to be covered by "flexible" arrangements such as temporary contracts, self-employment and part-time jobs.

This is a huge change compared with a couple of decades ago, when most people were sheltered from the effect of economic cycles by permanent jobs. In today's more flexible world, firms can push the impact of a business downturn on to workers by ending contracts or cutting part-time hours. Flexible workers often have to meet the costs of



their pensions, sick pay and their own training. They may, as now, enjoy the party when the economy is growing, but they will be on their own for the subsequent hangover, when the economy falters. Yesterday's drop in the stock market offered a fleeting image of how boom can turn to bust.

It is generally accepted that greater job insecurity is one of the prices we pay for lower unemployment. The availability of a more flexible workforce, easier in hire and fire, encourages employers to take on more staff. This is one reason why Britain, along with the United States, enjoys lower unemployment than European competitors. At 7.9 per cent, the rate here compares favourably with 11.3 per cent in Germany (more than 4 million people) and 11.8 in France.

But there is an economic - and a political - question as to how far this insecurity should be allowed to develop. Insecurity can do great damage, leaving people constantly on edge about where or whether they will still have a job on Monday morning. Planning for the future becomes difficult. Insecurity can make people work harder than is good either for themselves or their families. The social consequences are illustrated by plans by the pressure group Parents at Work to hold a "National Go Home On Time Day" on Midsummer's Day.

The Government, however, has still not properly woken up to this issue, hoping that economic growth will be sufficient to calm fears and assuage popular anger about job insecurity. The insensitivity of ministers was demonstrated this week when it emerged that Michael Heseltine wants to scrap the unfair-dismissal rights of millions of workers in small firms. The Deputy Prime Minister

would like to remove the entitlement of up to 11 million workers to appeal to an industrial tribunal if they are sacked.

Mr Heseltine, as a businessman, is understandably attracted to this idea. It would free up many small businesses from obligations they regard as burdensome. Their sector is the engine of growth, producing more new jobs than any other part of the economy. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that such firms feel frustrated by employment legislation protecting their staff.

But none of this offers a good enough reason to scrap employment protection rules which may be the only line of defence for staff who are unlikely to be unionised. Mr Heseltine has produced no concrete evidence that access to industrial tribunals is damaging job creation by small companies. Indeed, the rapid expansion of this sector suggests that business people, though occasionally irritated by the law, do not regard it as a real impediment to their ambitions. Talk to any small businessman and you are likely to be told that their real enemies are not industrial tribunals but red tape governing their products, health and safety legislation and the failure of customers to pay their bills on time.

Some ministers have recognised that insecurity must be minimised where economically prudent: Kenneth Clarke has highlighted the role that the welfare state must play in underpinning confidence within the workforce. But more of Mr Clarke's colleagues must recognise that job insecurity is the key threat to their own survival if this week's economic good news is to be translated into a general election victory for the Tories.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Big Bang and why our universe may not be alone

Sir: Infinity is hard to visualise, but impossible to deny. In infinite space-time, our universe, all 1.5bn light-years of it, is in human terms, less than a speck of dust existing for the blink of an eye. It is improbable - to me, inconceivable - that space-time was empty until the Big Bang happened and that our universe is its sole occupant. If conditions were right for the Big Bang to happen at one instant of space-time, the probability must be high that it was also right at other spaces and times. Infinite space-time should be littered with the results of other Big Bangs. If so, where is the evidence?

One possibility is that space-time has been filled with matter of the kind that wakes up our universe. One can visualise a random soup; but in such a soup, gravitational forces would cause matter to aggregate and then coalesce as in black holes. Further aggregation could result in gravitational collapse, leaving a zone with very little matter remaining free within its sphere of influence. If the enormous energy were then to be released in a Big Bang, a universe would be created.

If infinite space-time is filled with matter which is in a ferment of gravitational motion, it would be nice to postulate universes of matter and anti-matter in roughly equal numbers in collapsing and expanding modes. We may be seeing the first signs of such things in the Hubble observations of outer space.

Prof D M M McDowell
Brighton, East Sussex
The writer is Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering, Manchester University.

Sir: Dr Lowrie (Letters, 6 March) points out, in answer to

Professor Carswell, that the Big Bang is essentially unobservable, owing to the curvature of space. However, the excellent poster issued with the *Independent on Sunday* (3 March) refers to a period around 12 billion years ago as the "Universe's Dark Age" when the stars were too young to shine. So presumably, when telescopes have improved enough to see as far as 12 billion light years, there won't be anything to see at that distance, which at least would be negative evidence for the Big Bang.

MICHAEL BRAMSON
Wembley, Middlesex

Sir: I enjoyed your article "What on earth has space done for us?" (4 March). However, you seem to have got the facts confused in describing how Roy Plunkett discovered Teflon in 1938.

You say "the gas had reacted with the cylinder, which was made of tetrafluoroethylene". Tetrafluoroethylene is a gas, not the sort of substance cylinders are made of. As I heard the story from Professor Eric Banks of Unistat, an authority on organofluorine chemistry, Plunkett was surprised to find that a cylinder which should have contained tetrafluoroethylene was registering on the pressure gauge as being empty.

He then took the brave step of cutting the cylinder open (a highly risky thing to do which would breach the safety regulations in any modern chemistry laboratory), and found that the tetrafluoroethylene had polymerised to give the greasy white solid polytetrafluoroethylene, which became known as PTFE or Teflon.

D. ROBERTS, FRSC
Bebington, Merseyside

The vision thing: Hubble being launched last year

Sir: I would like to thank you for your brilliant coverage of modern cosmology and keeping us up-to-date of the latest issues ("The universal question", Magazine, 2 March). I find this to be the most exciting news around at the present. So much so in fact that I was shocked to realise only today that none of the children in our Primary School knew anything of Hubble's revelations. I immediately

produced a whole series of cuttings in full colour from the *Independent* and both staff and children began to share the awe and excitement of this latest journey of discovery. But it only makes me wonder how many are still ignorant of the mysteries which surround us!

Fr DOMINIC KIRKHAM
Canons Regular
of Premonstratensians
Manchester

Answering German question

Sir: Andrew Marr's article on Germany and Europe and Bryan Appleyard's concerning anti-educational cultures in Britain, point to a common truth. For politicians and others of Eurosceptic views, the German question is one of envy rather than fear of war. How has it come about that the defeated Germans in 1945 have shown such economic, social and democratic progress when we British have failed behind?

Many thousands of Brits, like me, have lived and worked in Germany since 1945. Most will agree that the UK and German ways of life have a great deal in common. Many also agree that the German democratic form of government is better than ours, with its regionalism and discussions prior to passing new laws.

The class system still unfortunately survives in Britain is not replicated in Germany, and there are only a handful of private schools mainly boarding. Germany's success has to a large extent depended on the excellence of its state education system, administered by the different *Länder* (regions).

Grammar, technical and secondary modern schools are the norm, and parents and pupils have absolute choice as to which type of school they attend. However, there is no automatic right to promotion according to age: pupils failing two subjects by the end of the school year have to repeat that year. Thus both parents and pupils have a much greater interest in education, especially as at age 16, not having a good school leaving certificate means they cannot get an apprenticeship, applicable to all jobs.

The German question is

really how can Europeans of other states match their achievements? Certainly not by being envious or pretending we do things better.

Mrs P WARD
Huddersfield

Sir: Andrew Marr thinks further European integration is too difficult and we had better come to terms with the status quo in a Europe that will inevitably be dominated by Germany ("Don't judge it: the European question is Germany", 7 March).

This proposition is not acceptable either to most of our EU partners or to Germany's eastern neighbours. Above all it is not desired by Germany herself. For them, in a politically united Europe of 370 million, rising to 475 million within 20 years, a Germany of 80 million inhabitants will no doubt be important and influential but certainly not dominant.

This has always been one of the principal motives for European integration ever since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in the 1950s. Difficult though the process has been, we are well on the way to an economic, monetary and political union.

Grammar, technical and secondary modern schools are the norm, and parents and pupils have absolute choice as to which type of school they attend. However, there is no automatic right to promotion according to age: pupils failing two subjects by the end of the school year have to repeat that year. Thus both parents and pupils have a much greater interest in education, especially as at age 16, not having a good school leaving certificate means they cannot get an apprenticeship, applicable to all jobs.

The German question is

DAVID AARONOVITCH

Mid-Cliff crisis

The outward signs of male aged man to be? I am a decade and a half younger than Cliff, but one morning last week I woke up with a feeling of terrible panic. My chest felt tight and my mouth was completely dry. It was like those dreams of childhood where it is Christmas Day, and there are no presents or the nightmares of adolescence in which you are about to enter the examination and realise that you have done no revision. Except I was awake and the one thought in my head was: "How the hell did I get to this age? Where has it all gone?" Sometime in the night, Death - for the first time (but presumably not the last) - had paid me a visit.

I am not looking for sympathy here. If you're older than me, you've been through it; if younger, well... you have it to come.

But I understand very well why Cliff wants to be Heathcliff. He has spent a lifetime being civilised, wholesome, decent and dentally perfect. A model of effortless self-restraint. But something elemental - mortality - is hard upon his beefy and now he wants to run to the hills, hunt with the wolves, eat red, raw meat and to howl. "Within all of us," he snarls, "is the potential to kill, to hate, to do bad things." To leave teabags in the sink.

This urge to be less restrained has been seen in many men. Two years ago, some folk thought they had spotted a character change in the author and broadcaster Melvyn Bragg. Previously rather bland and accommodating, he had turned nasty and impatient, growling at guests on his radio show and writing dirty stories. Bragg was reinventing himself.

And I like the new version. Bragg the Bastard has more edge than Melvyn the Melodious, and generates more heat. He made an adjustment and it worked. Very often it does, and it certainly beats the more pathetic attempts of men to defeat their mid-life blues, such as dumping their wives and kids.

So, Sir Cliff, the good news is that I would like to join you on the moor. The bad news is that I want to play Cathy. But which self is a middle-

Royal pictures

Sir: The Royal Collection does not belong to the state (letter, 6 March) and does not receive public funding. Numerous works are on loan and even before the Queen recently placed her collection in the care of trustees pictures were toured for free viewing in municipal galleries. The collection has never been more accessible. Her Majesty opened the Queen's Gallery as early as 1962 and this summer Buckingham Palace will again open to the public.

The "exorbitant entrance prices" at Hampton Court are the responsibility of the agency set up by the Government whose lack of arts funding is a scandal.

LEIGH HATT
London SE1

Safeguarding Whitehall code

Sir: When one of my most illustrious predecessors, Dennis Trevethan, states (Letters, 6 March) that "it was felt necessary for the Queen and not, let it be noted, the government, to appoint the First Civil Service Commissioner", he implies that there has been a change in this respect. I feel I should make it clear that I, too, was appointed by the Queen's Council but, unlike my predecessors, after an open

In the meantime I merely wish to add that it is the role of the Civil Service Commissioners, not the Recruitment and Assessment Services Agency, to ensure that the Civil Service Recruitment Code is followed by all Departments.

Sir MICHAEL BETT
First Civil Service
Commissioner
Office of the Civil
Service Commissioners
London SW1

The right sentence for violence

Sir: 1996 marks the 21st anniversary of the report of the Committee on Mentally Abnormal Offenders, chaired by the late Lord Butler, and I feel that both the Lord Chief Justice and the Home Secretary might well be advised to take down their copies, give them a dusting, and turn to the recommendation for a reviewable sentence.

This suggested that in cases where there was a substantial risk of committing a further violent offence the Crown Court could impose a sentence which would be subject to review at regular intervals, possibly every two years, with reports estimating the possible dangers to the public, and on release the

Dr I A CLIFFORD
Essex

The writer was a member of the Butler Committee, 1972-75

Stakeholders in housing

Sir: Your leader (6 March) suggests we have a choice between investment in home ownership and the flexibility of rental. One can have the best of both worlds. I have lived in co-operative housing associations for four years.

For a £1 investment I have become an equal shareholder in the co-op which owns the flat I live in. Collectively the members of the co-op manage the properties, so we have control over maintenance, lettings, development of new schemes, and other projects. This kind of property ownership is open to all, regardless of income.

We retain the flexibility of rental. One can move without

incurring the costs of surveyors, estate agents and solicitors.

In managing the business, members develop business skills that people in other forms of social housing may never have an opportunity to acquire. We are "stakeholders".

Regular management meetings lead to a genuine community spirit which is otherwise approaching extinction in British towns and cities. An African proverb suggests "it takes a village to raise a child". I have seen children with the confidence and social skills that come from being raised in such a community.

And finally, no one in co-operative housing subscribes to the nonsense that inflation in housing costs is a good thing.

IAN ELOARTH
Brighton

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PROFILE: Senator Robert Dole

He's sure to win his party's nomination. But what does Bob Dole stand for? Ummm, well... Rupert Cornwell reports

The first thing to know about Bob Dole, senior senator from Kansas and overwhelming favourite to win the Republican nomination to face Bill Clinton this autumn, is that when you meet him, you must offer your left hand, not your right. If you make that mistake, he will turn quickly but slightly awkwardly, and stretch out his left hand. Too late, you notice that the right hand, clenched around a protruding pen, is useless. The pen is there in part to deter people like you, in part because if he ever let go, the hand would splay out uncontrollably.

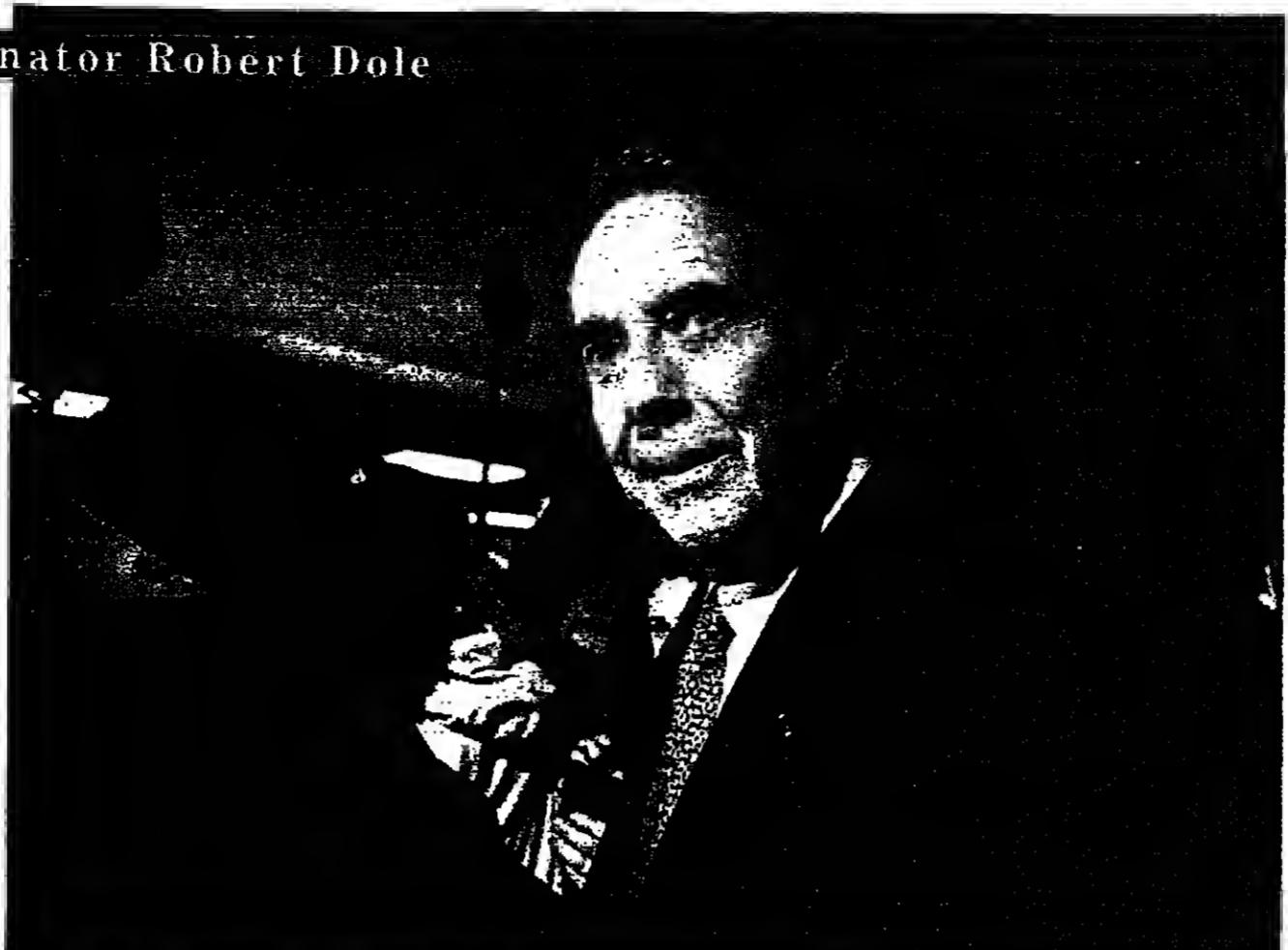
For half a century, Bob Dole has lived like that, ever since a German shell smashed into a young US army lieutenant in northern Italy on 14 April 1945, wrecking his shoulder and arm, damaging several vertebrae and leaving him half-paralysed. Rehabilitation took three years. Most men, less persevering by nature, would have remained invalids for life, but Dole's sheer determination prevailed. Today, that same grit has carried him - at 72 years of age, when the healthiest of men are well into merciful retirement - to the brink of, arguably, the most gruelling job on earth - the presidency of the United States.

The incongruities do not end there. An ideologically driven Republican revolution has swept Congress; yet the Republicans poised to seek the White House is the least revolutionary of men, a pragmatist to his fingertips, a gradualist who believes that politics is the art of the possible. At a time of huge public distrust of career politicians, when outsiders are the rage, the Republicans are about to send forth the ultimate insider.

The US presidency is supposed to require vision; Bob Dole, by his own admission, has none. His personal story is truly heroic, but he hates to dwell on it; after 35 years in Congress, a dozen of them as his party's leader in the Senate, he is acknowledged as a master legislator, but he dares not mention his achievements. Indeed, in the bully pulpit of the White House, he promises to be tongue-tied, or worse. His stump speech is genuinely excruciating staccato salvos of platitudes, random clichés drawn like numbered lottery balls from a bag. "This is 'Merica. I wanna talk about being Pres'ident," he will say in his rasping machine-gun of a voice, swallowing vowels by the throatful. "'Merica's a great country. Greatest country on earth. Gotta make it better still."

How, you wonder, can a man in politics so long, who has run for president in 1980 and 1988, still not have learnt to sell himself? Part is surely the Kansan in him, the dour plainsman for whom understatement is a way of life, and humour by its very nature an extravagance. Dole can be very funny, but his jokes are mostly stabbing, bleak and mocking, either of himself or others. "Yeah, I got elected president once. President of Iowa," he says, apropos of his initial but worthless win in his 1988 bid for the White House.

This time, his aides have toned a "new Dole" soft, fuzzy and reassuring. But the only real difference is that thus far the famous temper, the "mean streak", has been kept under control. Dole will never be a national cheerleader. His smile is still that of an undertaker. "Dole '96", runs a fictional campaign bumper-sticker. "A Dark Man for Dark Times".



Bob Dole campaigning in New Hampshire: his smile is that of an undertaker

Photograph: Brian Harris

One final mission, objectives unknown

The other reason that Dole can't make a decent speech is because he doesn't believe it's necessary. In the Dole view of the universe, the presidency is not to be won by glib promises and florid words (indeed, Newt Gingrich's omniscient pseudobible drives him insane) but by deeds. His selling points are experience and judgement, a "safe pair of hands", as the British like to say. If Dole can seem defensive and resentful, it is because he has been passed over so often, forced to watch as Republicans he considered less deserving claimed the supreme prize.

An ideologically driven Republican revolution has swept Congress; yet the Republican poised to seek the White House is the least revolutionary of men

is politics pure and simple, an almost ascetic existence in which weekend relaxation is an appearance on the Sunday morning talkshows (on which he is the most frequent guest in network history), or a spell on the exercise bike in the living-room.

Elizabeth, his wife of 20 years and a former cabinet secretary under presidents Reagan and Bush, is as busy and as addicted to work as he is. The couple still live in the one-and-a-half-bedroom flat in the Watergate building that Dole bought when his first marriage ended in divorce in 1972. An evening

ident and he cannot answer. "One last mission," he calls his candidacy, employing a metaphor of war and manifest destiny. But mission for what? Dole hasn't the faintest idea. "Haven't thought," he told the author Richard Ben Cramer last year. "I'm not going anywhere. It's not an agenda. I just gonna serve my country." If Americans want sweep and uplift from a president, Dole is not their man.

But there are moments, rare moments, when the guard comes down and you glimpse the man beneath. It happened in the Senate as Dole tried in vain to prevent American troops being sent to Bosnia, warning of brave but fearful young men facing the terrible risks of combat - just like the 21-year-old Bobby Joe Dole half a century ago - but this time in an unnecessary cause. It happened too at the funeral in 1994 of Richard Nixon, another politician of a hard-scrabble upbringing who had climbed back from defeat and disgrace.

Dole delivered one of the funeral orations that day, and quoted words of Nixon that could have been his own motto: "The greatest sadness is not to try and fail but to fail to try." Maybe they also reminded him of his own childhood in the Dust Bowl and Depression days of Russell, Kansas, in the Thirties, and the constant admonition of his mother, Bina: "Can't never could do anything." Normally so disciplined and composed, Dole's voice cracked and that April Day in California, he wept before the television cameras of the world. You watched, transfixed and disbelieving. Something similar on the campaign trail, and he might at last turn tedium into passion - and prove that an old man's mission has a purpose.

Change our number plate? RU MAD?

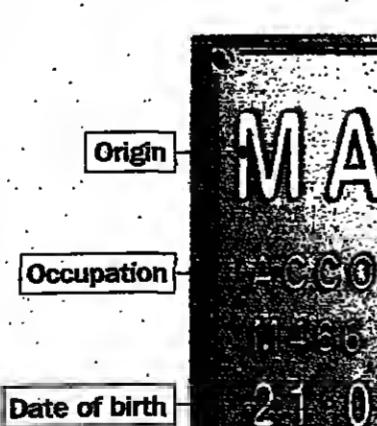
No matter how we register cars, the anorak element will remain, says Jonathan Glancey

Pick up a copy of *Exchange and Mart*, any copy, and turn to the voluminous used-car section. Under the makers' names - Ford, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Vauxhall - the small ads scream for attention under the imprint of ink-smeared fingers: "E-reg, tidy motor, fish, genuine two owners", "G-reg, immaculate, always garaged, no canvassers", "K-reg, high-mileage, hence price, no time-wasters".

This alphabet soup spills down the columns of cars for sale, for the British car buyer, and motor trade, is clearly obsessed with registration plates. We scour the classified ads knowing our Ps from our Es, if not our Ps from our Qs. Q, by the way, is applied to cars bought abroad, while P may well be the last in the current series of alpha-prefix British registration plates.

The Department of Transport, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) and the car industry are currently discussing the future of the number plate. From August 1997, it is likely that number plates will change on a quarterly rather than on the present annual basis. The reason is simply that the annual change in registration letters, which has taken place since January 1963 (shifting to August in 1967), has encouraged an upsurge of sales in a single month to the detriment of business during the rest of the year.

Buyers, it seems, must have the latest registration. Why buy an N-reg car on 31 July when you can impress your fellow cul-de-sac residents with a P-reg the very next day? This might sound silly, but when has our relationship with the car ever been rational? In the uncertain waters of the second-hand car business, the difference between



Road to lunacy? This hypothetical number plate lacks mother's maiden name but little else

an N and a P is a gulf in our imagination as wide as the English Channel. The former may be in better condition than the latter, yet, in most cases, it will be cheaper: all logic goes out of the window where registration plates are concerned.

That this is true is proved by the extremely silly prices car owners will pay for "personalised" plates. DVLA (the Swansea-based licensing authority) makes a small fortune for the Government by auctioning used-vehicle registration numbers at venues throughout Britain to date, DVLA auctions have raised £10m with individual bidders paying up to £20,000 for plates such as JGI.

To most of us, this is a form of madness; bad enough being asked to pin a name-tag to our lapels at a conference without having to tell the world who we are when driving home. There

are, however, many motorists only too keen to manifest their monicker - pop stars, DJs, property developers and advertising execs, only the loudest among them.

Most of us do not care one way or another, or not unless we are landed with a plate that makes us look even sillier than a pop star; there are some that include words like MOO or MUD, suitable for dairy farmers, perhaps, but surely not for us smart urban professionals (who would do better with SUP or YUP).

Even so, there are number plate games many of us (those with the child still in us) enjoy playing when driving abroad. In Italy, for example, you can keep passengers awake by asking them to play the guess-where-the-car-is-front-has-come-from game. NA stands for Naples, SI for Sienna, VE for Verona and so on (cars registered in

the capital are less discreet, boasting a fully spelt-out ROMA). This is diverting, not least because we can construct fantasy lives about the Veronese or Neopolitan families swerving across our path in a foot-on-the-floor Fiat Cinquecento. We can learn to raise our fingers in crude response as Italian drivers do, and shout "typical Neopolitan" or "typical Roman", even if we have no idea what a typical Neopolitan or Roman is like.

The French opt, as one would expect, for a rational system of car registration based on the logical division of post-revolutionary France into geometric departments. Here, numbers rather than names are the rule - we know a Parisian by the code 75. We tell Bavarians from Westphalians from stylish, information-packed German number plates, while

in the United States, we are offered a succinct character profile of individual states even before we cross the border - Florida, as many license plates brag, is the "Sunshine State" (promising lazy, hazy, crazy summer days) and Texas is the "Lone Star State", a law unto itself. Rhode Island plates carry the scary imprecation "Live free or die!"

Ran-of-the-mill British plates may appear to be arcane, yet they too tell police officers, motor traders and the sort of person who collects street-lamp numbers where a car originally came from - NXX and PPP means the car is from Berkshire, while ABH is a car from Buckinghamshire. But you would never guess.

Now that our system of registration is about to change, what sort of number plates might we opt for? We could choose a pretty system like the Italians. Alternatively, we could plump for a supermarket-style bar code. Caught up in the world of instantly accessible information, we might go the whole hog and choose plates that tell the world who we are in no uncertain terms - name, city of origin (us and the car), occupation and blood group in case of accident. Or we could, as Americans already have (at extra cost), decide on unique scripted plates that tell it like it is: "I'm Mandy, fly me" is one I've seen in Texas, but I wouldn't be surprised to read some day in London's West End: "Let's do lunch", or in Leicestershire: "I've a big cheese", or in Blackpool: "I've seen the lights." This might sound potty, but it would make each car memorable and easy to recover, while scanning the ads in *Exchange and Mart* would be a good deal more fun than it is now.

The high price of a chair at Oxford

Andrew Brown asks if Balliol College should accept a tainted professorship

"Honour, without money, is just a disease," wrote Jean Racine, and the University of Oxford knows what he meant. It has been assiduously raising funds for years, from Americans, from Rupert Murdoch, and even from the grandchildren of Nazi industrialists. That is where the trouble started: three years ago, Dr Gert-Rudolf Flick offered a large sum, supposedly £350,000 a year for five years, to establish a Flick Professorship of European Thought. For most newspaper readers, the name Flick means only incredible wealth and divorce bills. In the tabloids, he is known as the "Muck" Flick, whose wife, Maya, successfully appealed against the scarcely credible stinginess of a £9m divorce settlement. One can see how a woman who once gave £500,000 to the Hammersmith hospital might feel insulted when asked to live on so little.

For students of the Holocaust, however, Flick was also the family name behind one of the largest industrial combines of Nazi Germany, in whose factories, perhaps 30,000 enslaved labourers died. Dr Flick's grandfather, Friedrich, was sentenced to seven years for this after the war, of which he served three, without expressing remorse; and most of his fortune was confiscated. There remained enough, however, to provide the foundation for a new and even larger fortune, so that by the time he died in 1972 he was once more rich beyond imagination.

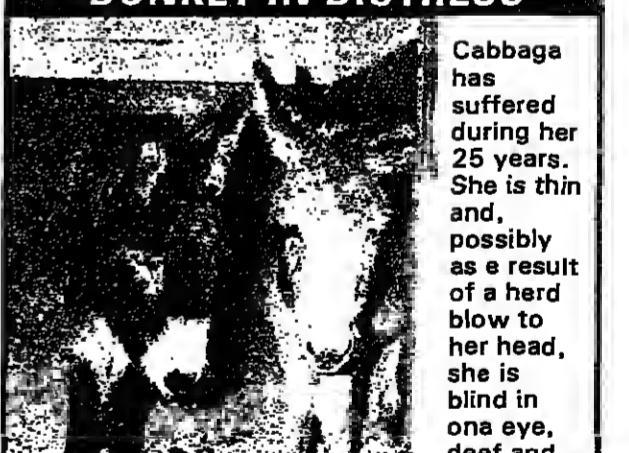
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David Selbourne, the political philosopher, has urged Balliol, his "old college", to fund the "moral courage" to renounce the gift. Yet the ethics committee of Oxford University has concluded that the money used to found the chair does not derive from objectionable practice.

They would, wouldn't they, rejoin the attackers of Balliol, and laud into ever more inventive parlour games. You would have thought it hard to improve on the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Communication Studies, Jean! "dropped" Aitchison, who has just completed delivering the Reith Lectures. But how about a Josef Stalin Chair of Minority Rights, or a Michael Howard Chair of Penal Policy?

What particularly offends the opponents of Mr Flick is exactly

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THE INDEPENDENT • Saturday 9 March 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: Tel 0171-293 2530 Fax 0171-293 2098

American jobs growth sends shares prices into dive

TOM STEVENSON and DAVID USBORNE

Shares dived in London and New York yesterday as higher-than-expected US jobs data spiked hopes of further base rate cuts. The FT-SE 100 index of leading stocks slumped off yesterday's quarter-point reduction in the cost of borrowing, taking its lead from a panicky opening in New York. At one point the FT-SE 100 index was 72 points lower but it regained some of its poise to-

wards the end of the session, closing 47.9 points off at 3,710.3.

The day's loss means the index is now only 21 points, less than 1 per cent, higher than at the beginning of the year.

Tumbling share prices took dealers by surprise. Mike Buttler, a trader at Pannier Gordon, said: "I can't remember having seen an interest rate reduction and the market down 61 points. It's all about America, of course, but I wouldn't be surprised to see the market better in a week's time."

Others took the view, however, that the strengthening of the US economy had given European banks less scope for rate cuts. There was speculation that had Kenneth Clarke left the quarter-point cut until Monday he would not have felt able to reduce rates.

Fears that yesterday's cut may be the last for some time pushed the 10-year gilt lower, driving the yield 21 basis points higher to 8.06 per cent, the highest for almost five months.

Wall Street was briefly sent

reeling on news of a giant leap in job numbers in the US economy in February, which dashed hopes of a further cut in interest rates by the Federal Reserve.

The statistics initially had a devastating effect on the Dow Jones Industrial average, which plunged by as much as 116 points in the first half hour of yesterday's trading. The index later stabilised somewhat and was off by around 70 points at the lunch hour.

The biggest beating was taken by the bond market, bow-

ever, with the Treasury 30-year long bond down by 3 points in early trading. Even so, the 30-year bonds were still off by a sobering 2.5 points while the yield has climbed steeply from 6.47 per cent to 6.71 per cent.

Sparkling it all was the report from the US Labor Department showing a net rise of 703,000 non-farm jobs in February, far exceeding most analysts' expectations.

It was the highest single monthly gain in 13 years. The overall unemployment rate fell to 5.5 per cent.

The report in effect torpedoed the notion popular with many analysts over recent weeks that the expansion in the US economy had run its course and that a period of recession might even have been in prospect. It was that scenario that had kept hopes alive that the Federal Reserve might have made one more cut in interest rates at its next policy meeting on 26 March.

By contrast, an unemployment rate of 5.5 per cent is likely now to stir renewed fears of

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ICL to sack a further 1,000 workers

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

ICL, the UK computer group owned by Fujitsu of Japan, has embarked on a radical restructuring involving more job losses in an effort to return the company to the black. The changes include the demerger of its personal computer operations throughout Europe and the sale of D2D, its electronics manufacturing arm.

The group will also cut up to 1,000 jobs in its remaining businesses in addition to 1,300 implemented or announced over the last 12 months.

Keith Todd, chief executive, said ICL was still intent on re-listing on the London Stock Exchange, originally intended to take place last year. He said: "Flotation will happen, I am committed, the board is committed and the shareholders are committed. The only question is when."

"We already have sound revenue growth but my overriding priority now is to increase profit and maximise shareholder value."

Mr Todd also said that ICL planned a £200m rights issue, underwritten by Fujitsu, to strengthen the capital base and invest in the core activities of systems, software and services.

Last year ICL slumped to a pre-tax loss of £188m, after exceptional charges from a profit of £28.4m in 1994. The combined operating losses of the personal computer and electronics manufacturing op-

erations were £57m. The losses, announced yesterday, were in spite of a 17 per cent increase in revenues to £3.1bn and due largely to squeezed profit margins and fierce competition.

Under the restructuring plan, the design and manufacture of ICL personal computers will be demerged and combined with Fujitsu's own PC business, with ICL retaining a small stake. The operations to be demerged employ 2,000 people in several European factories and had a turnover last year of £650m. Initially at least, PCs made by the new combined business will continue to bear the joint Fujitsu/ICL brand.

The electronics manufacturing arm employs 2,200 people in the UK – principally in Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent – and has a turnover of about £350m.

ICL is seeking a "partner" to buy the majority and will retain a stake of less than 20 per cent. It already manufactures under contract to rival computer firms and will continue to do so for ICL once it is sold.

Mr Todd said: "ICL is now a much clearer proposition – a computer system and service company. We are focussing ICL firmly on its core business and will accelerate the profit recovery."

The dramatic shakeout comes less than three months after Mr Todd moved into the job from the previous post of finance director. His accession followed the appointment of his predecessor, Sir Peter Bonfield, as chief executive of BT.

Halif
BC W
float



Awaiting the postman: Among the illustrious names anticipating their fate are (clockwise from top left) David Ashby MP, the former boxer Henry Cooper, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, Virginia Wade, the ex-tennis star, Lord Archer, and John Taylor of the group Duran Duran. The main picture is of Lloyd's building in central London

Lloyd's names brace themselves for the reckoning

JOHN EISENHAMMER and PETER RODGERS

More than 34,000 Lloyd's names world-wide are bracing themselves this weekend for the first estimates of how much it will cost to end their eight-year nightmare with the troubled insurance market.

Lloyd's last night embarked on the biggest mailing exercise in its history, sending out worldwide the individual bills that names have been waiting for, fearing, for many months.

A roll-call of famous names, including Virginia Wade and Henry Cooper, the actress Susan Hampshire and Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, will be among those looking to the doorman on Monday morning for the bulky package, full of advice and warnings, and the vital figure of what Lloyd's pledges is the final bill to end it all.

About 9,000 names face paying the maximum £100,000, over and above losing all their funds deposited at Lloyd's. A further £1,000 will need to raise cash sums up to £110,000 as the cost of covering all potential liabilities from the old policies that Lloyd's is hiving off into a special re-insurance vehicle, Equitas. Lloyd's stressed yesterday that these are estimated bills; the final Equitas premium statements will be sent out in late May.

Lloyd's chairman, David Rowland, urged names in an accompanying letter to hit the bullet

and accept this as the price for drawing a line under the traumas of the past. There will not be another settlement plan. "If we miss this opportunity, the consequences will be very serious. None of us should be under any illusion that any alternative proposals offer greater comfort," he said.

But several names' action group leaders, who had received their bills earlier, warned that the cost for the hardest-hit and most litigious names is still too high.

The Lloyd's nightmare

1987 Profit	£509m
1988 Loss	£510m
1989 Loss	£1.9bn
1990 Loss	£2.3bn
1991 Loss	£2bn
1992 Loss	£1.2bn
1993 Est profit	£1bn
1994 Est profit	£838m
1995 Est profit	£838m

"As a result of what we know now, it is clear the amount of money on the table is insufficient. We need another £400m to make Equitas fly," said John Mays, chairman of the Merritt action group.

He is among a delegation of names' leaders urging the Department of Trade and Industry to bring pressure to bear on Lloyd's to find more than the £2.8bn of credits and debt relief

Representatives of the names believe that without another £350m-£500m added into the pot to reduce, and perhaps halve the size of the maximum bill to £50,000, there is a serious risk that the settlement will be voted down when it is put to the market as a whole in July. Names believe it would cost only about £350m to halve the cap.

As well as shrinking the £100,000 cap, which affects 9,000 heavily loss-making names, there are hopes that additional funds can be found to help out members of the hardest-hit syndicates and to increase the sums set aside for hardship relief. Either Lloyd's needs to find more funds from market professionals, or with the DTI it must agree to reduce the very harsh reserve requirements for Equitas. Either would ease the cost to names, Mr Mays said.

Anthony Nelson, the DTI minister responsible for the insurance market, has been told by names groups that the funding of Equitas is far too conservative and is mopping up money that could be better used in improving the terms for names.

Lloyd's has been hinting privately that it expects to be able to increase the offer to names by the time the final bills go out, even if it means raising a loan in the market.

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Black Friday in the boardroom: Shake-up at the retailer, darkening clouds over Italian airline, and a surprising departure at the conglomerate

Quarmby checks out from Sainsbury's

NIGEL COPE

David Quarmby, a senior director with Sainsbury's, is leaving the supermarket group after being passed over in the group's boardroom reshuffle in January. According to the terms of his contract, Mr Quarmby could be entitled to compensation of up to £1m, although Sainsbury said this was unlikely.

Mr Quarmby, 54, was deputy managing director and has been with the company for 11 years. He is leaving by mutual consent to pursue other interests. "There are a number of options I am considering", he said yesterday.

Prior to Sainsbury's boardroom shake-up, Mr Quarmby had been number three in Sainsbury's hierarchy behind chairman David Sainsbury and deputy chairman Tom Vyner. However, following the appointment of Dino Adriano as chief executive designate, Mr Quarmby's role became marginalised. He will not be re-



DAVID QUARMBY: Role becomes marginalised

placed and his responsibilities for strategy and the provision of services to the group will be divided between Mr Sainsbury and finance director Rosemary Thorne.

Last year Mr Quarmby received a total of £450,000 including bonus and pension payments. He was on a two-year rolling contract. However Sainsbury's said it was unlikely that Mr Quarmby would re-

ceive the maximum amount. "Some compensation will be payable reflecting the mutually agreed status of his departure," a spokesman said. Mr Quarmby also holds 62,330 shares which at yesterday's share price – down 6p at 379p – were worth £240,000. He has options over a further 377,570 shares awarded at an average price of 329p.

Mr Quarmby joined Sainsbury in 1984 as distribution director. In 1988 he was appointed joint managing director responsible for non-trading activities.

His departure was unexpected. Andrew Fowler, food retail analyst at brokers UBS said: "It is a surprise but I don't think it will have any real impact. It is a bit of a storm in a teacup." Analysts now expect an external appointment to become chief executive of the US business. This includes the Shaws supermarket group as well as the group's stake in Giant, the Washington and Baltimore chain.

RUSSELL HOTTEN

The crisis at Italy's flagship airline, Alitalia, deepened last night after the chairman angrily resigned, warning that the company's survival was at risk after failure to tackle strikes and debts.

The departure of Renato Rivero, which follows the dismissal last year of the managing director, suggests that the tough cost-cutting strategy at the company is likely to be put on hold.

Europe's private airlines, such as British Airways, have been campaigning against continued state subsidies for their rivals and will be watching whether it means more aid is pumped in.

Reforming Alitalia was seen as a test case for Italy's bloated public sector, which has long been the subject of political interference and concessions to the powerful unions.

Mr Rivero and the former managing director, Roberto Schisano, joined Alitalia in 1994 – the former from IBM

and the latter from Texas Instruments.

In a letter to an Italian financial newspaper, Mr Rivero said he had lost the confidence of the airline's owner – IRI, the state industrial holding giant. He called IRI "eager, mute and passive" in the face of Alitalia's problems.

IRI's attitude showed the "tradition of compromise which our country seems unable to renounce," Mr Rivero said.

"I have resigned as president of Alitalia to put an end to an unsustainable and paradoxical situation that was created in the relationship between me and the majority shareholder Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale SpA," he said.

The company's problems have been exacerbated by a string of strikes called by unions to protest at tough restructuring plans unveiled by Mr Schisano last year.

Trade unions have threatened another eight-hour strike for March 12, with management and workers due to meet early next week to try to break the deadlock. However Mr Rivero said the airline's management had not been backed up by IRI in its dealings with the unions.

Greener forced out at BAT

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

BAT lost the highly regarded head of its financial services division yesterday, just two days after the tobacco-to-insurance group announced an overhaul of the Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar operations he had run for the past four years.

A terse statement said George Greener had resigned "by mutual consent" although a company source confirmed that the impetus for the abrupt departure of the 50-year-old main board director had come from the company. Mr Greener is understood not to have another job to go to.

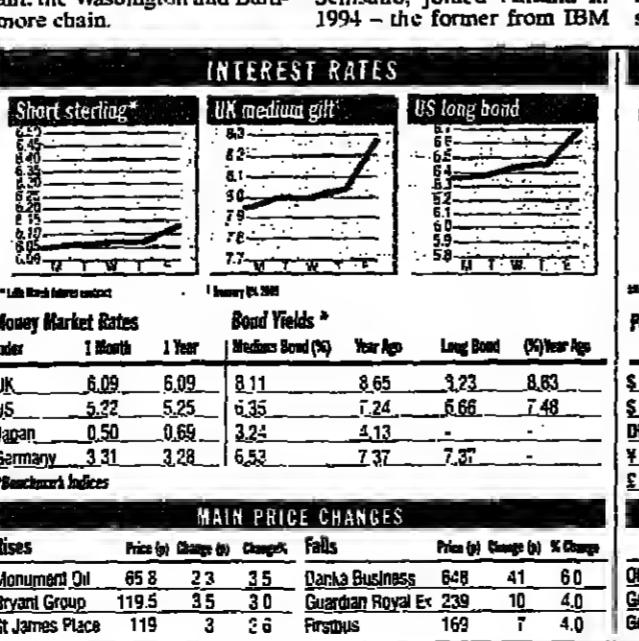
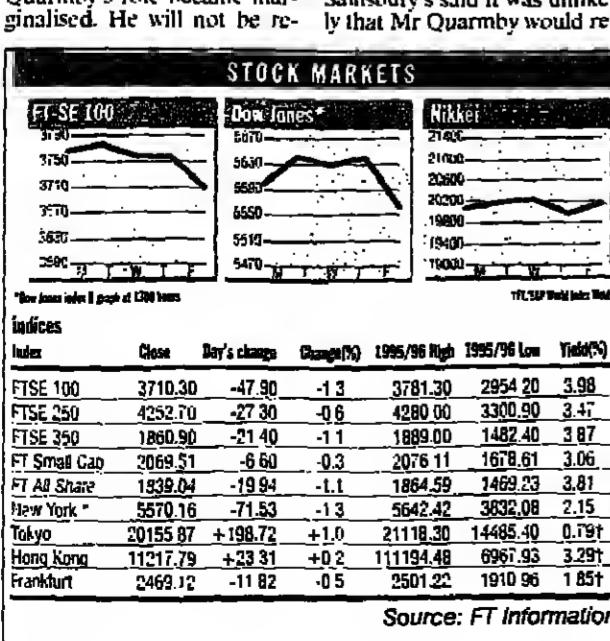
Negotiations regarding his severance pay continue but BAT is thought unlikely to honour the whole of a two-year rolling contract, which saw Mr Greener take home a basic salary of £50,000 in 1994 even before a bonus of £136,000. A compromise payment of about one year's salary is thought likely.

Mr Greener's arrival at BAT in 1991, after 20 years with Dunbar, was greeted with much fanfare and high hopes that his consumer goods marketing expertise could be used to good effect in the group's financial services operations.

Analysts were yesterday baffled by the style of his departure, not least because he had seemed to be a strong proponent of the company's stated strategy of creating greater coherence between Eagle Star's and Allied Dunbar's contribution to group profit before more than a quarter last year.

Weekend Money section

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COMMENT

Final push for a global settlement begins

Lloyd's has at last begun the final push. Much of the talk to date has been pretty theoretical; now the cold, hard figures are on the table, and the real bargaining can get under way. Lloyd's never tires of emphasising that these bills are only estimates of how much it will cost every one of the 34,000 names so they can hive off all their liabilities from old policies into the special re-insurance company, Equitas. The final bills will go out in late May.

But Lloyd's none the less claims that for the vast majority of names little change should be expected. Time is very short, as the wedge of documents and letters accompanying the indicative Equitas bills makes plain. The cash must be paid up in July, or the whole, daring enterprise to keep Lloyd's from toppling over the brink will fail.

Lloyd's management, headed by Ron Sandler, the chief executive, has been in overdrive making the case to names up and down the country for accepting the settlement, and describes the plan for ending the nightmare as the least worst of all alternatives.

The seriousness with which Lloyd's has gone about this job has impressed many of the sceptics, and there are plenty of those in the twisted and scarred world of the insurance market. Such is the mistrust, and in some areas, downright hatred, that getting any sort of consensus for survival is a remarkable achievement. None the less, there are signs of one emerging. The chances of pulling off a global settlement of Lloyd's problems are probably now better than 50-50.

However, Lloyd's urgently needs to find up to £500m more money to improve the odds. It could come from brokers or auditors or from a reduction in the very tough reserving requirements for Equitas. Every unnecessary extra pound going into Equitas is in effect taken out of the pockets of the names that are meant to benefit.

One of these possibilities, or a combination, would reduce the cost to names of putting the nightmare behind them. For the key group of names that must be won over – the hardest hit who also make up the bulk of the fiercest litigants – the choice between accepting the offer or saying to hell with it remains too close a call for comfort. Some have already been awarded handsome sums by the courts which the offer cannot fund anything like in full.

Lloyd's is hinting privately that more money will be forthcoming; that the final bills for the 9,000 facing the maximum losses should be significantly lower. To be confident of success, it will need to deliver – and it is in the DTI's interest to ensure it does, because the loss of a market as prestigious as Lloyd's would be a severe blow to London.

Some good economic news ... and some bad

Bad news on the British economy – interest rates fell again yesterday. Those who rely on their savings for current income can be for-

given for exasperation over the way mortgage rates receive all the attention in the headlines. Investors in variable interest rate savings have lost up to a fifth of their income over the last year or so and for many older people that can lead to a painful cut in living standards.

Luckily, the news is not all bad this time round. In recent weeks there have been clear signs that savings institutions have been prepared to take some of the fall in base rates on the chin by cutting their own margins, which have been as high as two percentage points.

Nationwide cut its lending rates and increased its savings rates last month. Bradford & Bingley cut mortgage rates and held savings steady and several other building societies have followed. They can afford to do this because the high margins of the past few years have left them with healthy reserves.

Some look on this largesse as a way of giving the benefits of mutuality directly to borrowers and depositors. Without dividends to pay to shareholders, societies can afford to cut their profits by giving a better deal directly to their owners, the customers. But even those that are becoming banks are cutting their margins.

Nevertheless, this may not be enough to prevent the latest fall in base rates leading to some modest further fall in savings rates, even though banks and building societies are likely to absorb some of the reduction. National Savings may be affected, too.

So what should savers do? One reaction would be to grab the highest fixed-rate offers around to look in today's savings rates. Another would be to accept more risk, perhaps by switching to a five-year corporate bond PEP paying 7.5 per cent or more.

But there are signs in the markets that the fall in the shortest term savings rates could be quite brief, and will probably not be sustained for long – certainly not beyond the election.

Longer term rates for three- to five-year money in the swaps market are already edging up again, in the opposite direction to base rates. Professional investors are focusing on what may happen well beyond the election.

There is no sign yet that longer term savings rates, which are influenced by these money market rates, are moving upwards. But they should certainly be much more stable than base rates and short term savings such as 90 day deposits. There is no need to panic.

Too far, too hard for US market

At risk of sounding like Michael Fish, the investor who asked whether this was the beginning of a stock market hurricane should be advised to relax. These regular little panics in New York are, however,

telling us something: the US market has been pushed too far and too hard and is vulnerable to correction whenever there is any unwelcome news.

The shock over the employment figures in the US was actually rather positive for the economy, in the sense that it was caused by a realisation that growth may be running faster than the consensus believed possible.

That is bad news only in the sense that the markets are now looking towards eventual higher interest rates to cool the expansion. It is a commonplace that investors have felt more comfortable with sluggish growth, low inflation and stable policy than with the prospect of a boom that might be followed by bust. They can no longer be sure that this scenario will last.

The yield curve on bonds has already been moving steadily upwards. The markets have now seen apparent confirmation that the Federal Reserve may have been wrongly identifying a pause in the growth cycle as an early warning of recession.

The last time that happened was in 1986 when the Fed had to go heavily into reverse, after mistakenly stoking up a rip-roaring boom. But though there may be a change of perception about growth prospects and there is a growing risk of quite a sharp downward correction in the markets, it is hard to see this as the beginning of a long bear market.

Halifax sacks SBC Warburg as float adviser

NIGEL COPE

Britain's biggest building society, Halifax, dealt a body blow to SBC Warburg yesterday when it dropped the investment bank as its financial adviser and lead stockbroker for its £10bn flotation on the stock market next year. The controversial decision will cost Warburg tens of millions of pounds in lost fees and savage its already wounded reputation in the City. Compensation for lost fees is considered unlikely.

Halifax, chaired by Jon Foulds, said its decision arose out of the "management relationship" with Warburg and a potential conflict of interest. The main reason behind the decision is Halifax's dissatisfaction with the new style of merchant banking at Warburg since its takeover last year by Swiss Bank Corporation.

The building society has become increasingly concerned

about senior level departures in the advisory team that was acting on its behalf. "If it looks unstable at the top, that can become a cause for concern," a Halifax spokesman said. Another said: "This is such a massive transaction that will take place over a long period. You need stable relationships."

There have been two senior departures which are thought to have led to Halifax's concern. Anthony Brook, the Warburg director who led the team on Halifax, left in December to join the rival investment bank BZW. Derek Higgs, one of Warburg's most senior executives, left earlier this year to join Prudential.

There have been expressions of concern elsewhere about the bank's approach to client relations, which are now much more product-driven, adopting "SBC's American investment banking culture, rather than the relationship-style that made Warburg the envy of the

City in its heyday. Halifax's decision follows the desertion of the bank by a long list of other clients, including Wexford Water, which dropped Warburg as its financial adviser ahead of its bid for South West Water this week. In addition, Boots and P&O have recently replaced Warburg as their stockbroker.

The haemorrhage of top clients is becoming a serious issue for the bank, whose corporate finance department is struggling, while the securities side is thriving on the merger. Halifax has replaced Warburg with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell as its financial adviser. Merrill Lynch, which was formerly joint broker with Warburg, has been elevated to joint broker while a second stockbroker is sought.

Warburg was saying little yesterday but did not attempt to hide its dismay at being booted off the Halifax team in such a prestigious stock market flotation. "We are clearly disappointed by this but we wish the Halifax every success in its flotation. In the meantime we are pleased to continue to work with them on other projects."

Warburg stressed that as well as the long list of client deser-

pointed by this but we wish the Halifax every success in its flotation. In the meantime we are pleased to continue to work with them on other projects."

Warburg stressed that as well as the long list of client deser-

tions, it had continued to win new business. It has been appointed by Kvaerner to advise on its £900m takeover of Trafalgar House. The Swiss drugs giant Sandoz has appointed Warburg to advise on the sale

of its speciality chemicals business.

Halifax stressed that the change in its advisers would have no impact on the planned timetable for its proposed conversion to bank status.

IN BRIEF

Ciba-Geigy merger to cost 600 UK jobs

Around 600 UK jobs are expected to be lost as a result of the £41bn merger between Swiss drug giants Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz. Speaking in London yesterday, Alex Krauer, who will be chairman of Novartis, the new company, said the forecast 10 per cent cut in jobs world-wide as a result of the deal would fall roughly proportionately on the UK workforce, which currently stands at around 6,000. The directors said Novartis was likely to exceed expected synergy benefits "conservatively" put at \$1.5bn over three years, including \$500m from the pharmaceutical business. They also hinted that Novartis was ready to make acquisitions.

Two rail maintenance companies sold

Two more of the seven rail maintenance companies were sold by the British Railways Board yesterday. The Central Infrastructure Maintenance Company, based in Birmingham, has gone to GEC Alsthom Railway Maintenance, a joint venture between GEC Alsthom and Tarmac Construction. Another joint venture, Amey Railways, involving the Amey construction group and existing management, has bought the Swindon-based Western IMCO.

Confusion breaks out over Rentokil

Confusion broke out last night over the long-term commitment of Rentokil's majority shareholder, the Danish company Sophus Berendsen. If the UK company's £1.8bn bid for BET succeeds, Sophus, whose 51.8 per cent stake would be reduced to 35.7 per cent after a takeover, was willing to cut its stake still further to 25 per cent, according to reports. Rentokil said comments from Sophus' chief executive had been misquoted, and the Danish company would not sell its shares for at least one year after a takeover. BET, whose defence document is expected on Monday, said that "clearly there was a lack of communication between Rentokil and Sophus."

Hotel owner comes to market

The owner of London's Gloucester, Chelsea and Bailey's hotels is coming to market next month in a £350m flotation. Millennium & Copthorne Hotels, which also owns 42 per cent of New York's Plaza, is hoping to cash on booming conditions at the top end of the hotel market. Currently owned by the Hong Kong-listed hotel group CDL, the company has a portfolio of 23 four-star hotels, including a string of provincial business sites in the UK trading under the Copthorne brand. Its parent plans to retain up to 60 per cent of the shares after the float.

Regal buys White Hart chain

Regal Hotels finally secured most of the White Hart chain of three-star hotels yesterday but was squeezed by Granada into paying a significantly higher price than it agreed with previous owner, Forte. Regal will pay a similar amount to the £12m it agreed with Forte but has agreed to settle for just 60 hotels instead of the 67 in the original deal.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Empire Blinds (F)	35.3m (35.1m)	5.2m (5.8m)	7.82p (5.65p)	1p (nil)
Group (F)	216m (167m)	13.1m (12.0m)	78p (71p)	25p (22p)
Hawthorn Countrywide (F)	150m (108m)	-7.8m (-5.1m)	-2.18p (-1.43p)	nil (0.05p)
Macmillan Group (F)	315m (170m)	2.05m (0.82m)	0.65p (0.52p)	0.65p (0.4p)
Regal Hotel Group (F)	18.1m (7.22m)	2.5m (0.73m)	3.39p (1.88p)	0.5p (+)
Severnstar-Rowse (F)	25.6m (28.2m)	0.48m (1.5m)	3.07p (0.66p)	1p (3p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (M) - 12 months

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by Magnus Grimond

Lean pickings for investors looking for bid targets

Yesterday's sharp correction in the stock market notwithstanding, takeover fever continues to be a main factor underpinning share prices just now. The £40bn mega-merger between Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz unveiled this week has directed investors' gaze towards pharmaceuticals, which is currently consolidating space.

Conditions remain fertile for further moves in this area. The industry remains highly fragmented. Market shares of the leading groups are bunched between 2 and 5 per cent. The firepower is there too. Not all balance sheets are stretched: Novartis, the company to be formed from the merger of Ciba and Sandoz, will kick off with a dowry of \$15.5bn (£8.4bn) net cash and securities. Its Swiss rival, Roche, has a strong balance sheet. Both are potential predators, but, despite the excitement, UK investors looking to spot their targets may find the pickings are lean.

For a start, the numbers of British prey have diminished after last year's takeover of Wellcome by Glaxo and Fisons by Rhône-Poulenc Rorer. Shares in Zeneca, the last middle-sized British group, have rocketed to an all-time peak on the speculation. But it now looks expensive. Cost savings might be dwarfed by goodwill write-offs. If Roche wanted to do a deal,

it is likely it would have to be done as a friendly merger and Zeneca made clear on Thursday that it would be reluctant to come to the altar voluntarily.

That is not a reason to sell the shares, however. Given its strong portfolio of growth products, Zeneca remains attractive. An agreed marriage with SmithKline Beecham or Glaxo Wellcome, still heavily indebted as a result of previous corporate moves, could give an inexpensive yet substantial kicker to earnings in the future.

The other sector which has been exciting interest from speculators is media. Big players on Wall Street, such as Disney's link-up with ABC/Capital Cities, have ignited the undervaluations of similar UK stocks. But what has really lit a fire under the sector is the new broadcasting bill, which is set to replace the limit on the number of ITV franchises any one company can hold with a 15 per cent cap on its share of the television audience.

NatWest Securities believes the industry could consolidate into three players by the end of the year and just one by the end of the decade. That leaves smaller players looking vulnerable. Yorkshire Tyne Tees, where Granada owns 25 per cent, and HTV, which could be snapped up by the MAI-United News grouping, look ripe.

Carlton, the London and Midlands television franchise holder, is the shark in this pool of tiddlers.

Elsewhere in the wider entertainment

sector, EMI,

with its lucrative list

of recording stars and music rights,

looks a sitting duck when it is merged later this year by Thorn-EMI.

The merchant bankers

have also clearly been running

their slide rules over Pearson,

which is an obvious break-up candidate with its amorphous mix of merchant banking to theme parks.

Bidders for both of these are likely

to come from outside the UK, with Disney, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Reuters and Sony all possible candidates.

Landbrooke and Rank, two of the tired

old men of the leisure sector, could also

be broken up with relative ease, although

some of the assets might be hard to sell.

More juicy would be JD Wetherspoon and

Regent Inns, pub groups spawned of the

Government's beer orders. Parts of all four

of these groups would fit well with either

Bass or Whitbread, where leisure is seen

as a growing part of the business.

Other sectors which have seen some of

the hottest takeover action in the past year

are still bubbling away, albeit at lower levels.

Royal Bank of Scotland could prove vulnera-

ble to HSBC as the Chinese takeover of

its Hong Kong neighbour approaches next

year. Its Edinburgh neighbour, the Bank of

Scotland could be similarly placed, but in-

vestors may miss out on other takeovers in

the financial services industry. The targets

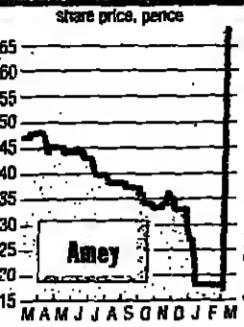
of the

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3710.3 -47.9
FT-SE 250
4252.7 -27.3
FT-SE 350
1860.9 -21.4
SEAQ VOLUME
895.9m shares,
37,966 bargains
Gilt Index
92.64 -0.75

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



A cut too far for Footsie as panic erupts in New York

Shares suffered their biggest fall for nearly three months as the stock market seemed to be audaciously questioning the timing of yesterday's interest rate cut.

After clambering for lower rates, the market greeted the eventual reduction with a 47.9 points fall to 3,710.3; at one time it was down 72.

It was, however, the American interest rate scene which provoked the slide.

Shares were drifting, doing very little, with lower rates already discounted. Then US pay-roll figures produced panic: they appeared to dash hopes of a US rate cut.

New York crashed down 114.5 in early trading.

London, which in the main has chosen to ignore the Dow's record breaking exploits, was caught cold on a dull Friday afternoon and with a market makers ducking and

driving prices slumped. Yet a trader at one leading house was heard complaining he had not received a single selling order.

Behind the fall was the fear the long-awaited cut could, ironically, turn out to be a cut too far.

The market had expected other nations to follow the UK but if US rates are frozen they are unlikely to do so.

At best, it appeared that after three cuts in three months no further reduction would occur for some time.

At the close only three blue chips mustered gains: GKN, on its results, 16p to 893p; SmithKline Beecham, 4p to 721p and RTZ, 1p to 923p.

Globo Wellcome, the drugs giant which needs another acquisition, experienced unusually heavy trading with, it appeared, some investors keen to switch into other drug shares. At one time Zeneca

was up 31p but ended 7p lower at 370p.

Reed International's decision to defer the sale of its consumer books division because it had not received acceptable offers, lowered the shares 28p to 1,035p.

Takeover speculation was overwhelmed by the retreat. GRE, the insurance group, seemed to be on the verge of being the Friday afternoon ramp but ended 10p lower, at 139p. But Alders, the department store group with extensive duty free interests, had a 12p gain to 202p as talk of a break-up bid, with LVMH taking the duty free operation, resurfaced.

Nyex held at a 1p gain to 105p as talks with TelWest, down 1.5p at 141p, were confirmed.

Siebe, the engineer, was at one time 19p higher, reflecting an investment presentation. The shares ended 4p off at 833p. Barclays, the banking group, lost 19p to 733p on talk of a cautious presentation at its securities arm, Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

South West Water rose 8p to 616p and potential bidder Wessex Water recovered 3p to 327p.

Amey, the roadbuilder, surged 51p to 168p following the acquisition of a British Rail maintenance company for

£15m. The deal prompted Steven Williams at stockbroker Williams de Broe to lift this year's profit forecast by more than £4m to £10.75m.

The shares were floated at 161p two years ago.

Costain, the builder, was one to cling to a gain, 10p to 91p. The rate cut and bid hopes prompted the progress.

Some television shares sharply lower in early trading as it became clear payment from Channel 4 would be reduced, closed above their

residuals.

Scottish Television, at 638p, halved its fall to 20p; Carlton, at one time down 12p, finished at 428p, off 2p. But others rebounded.

Allied Radio held at 3.75p as independent Radio bid 3.3p per share, pricing the struggling group at £4.5m.

The bidder has the support of shareholders with 12.98 per cent and was thought to have

picked up shares in the market.

Severfield-Reeve, the fabrications group, duly produced the rumoured takeovers two private companies. It is also raising £6.6m, placing shares at 180p; they gained 10p to 106p yesterday.

The Canadians have discovered AIM Probe Exploration, an oil explorer and producer with a quote on the Alberta Stock Exchange, is hoping to arrive in a few months. It expects to make profits of £175,000 this year.

Assets are 100p a share; its Alberta capitalisation is £7m.

Part of the excitement which lifted Vlewian from 100p to 300p could stem from suggestions it has fixed up a deal for its computerised data service with the up-market Meridien hotel chain, now part of Granada.

TAKING STOCK

Inspirations, the holidays group, continues to attract takeover talk. After hitting 35p last month the shares have edged ahead on suggestions an overseas group is planning to buy a stake or even mount a full bid. They firmed to 106p yesterday.

The Canadas have discovered AIM Probe Exploration, an oil explorer and producer with a quote on the Alberta Stock Exchange, is hoping to arrive in a few months. It expects to make profits of £175,000 this year.

Assets are 100p a share; its Alberta capitalisation is £7m.

London Fiduciary Trust,

with gold interests in the Philippines, at 2.75p. I Hoare, the stockbroker, described the shares as "a cheap way to own a part of the Pacific rim of fire gold rush" now underway.

Hoare is involved in a private placing to raise \$14m for LFT at 2p a share.

Gold production, it says,

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent to reflect the change in the share price. The price earnings (PE) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share excluding exceptional items.

Other details: ex rights Ex dividend ex cash ex Dividend Securities Market Suspended Pmt Party Paid pm NI Paid Shares.

Source: Frost.

The Independent Index

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FT-SE 100 - Realtime 00 Sterling Rates 04 Privateline Issues

UK Stock Market Report 05 Bulletin Report 05 News 39

UK Company News 06 Wall Street 06 Electrical Shares 42

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sport

Clearing up the language of confusion

It is always nice to see a man who gives full backing to his subordinates, even if the head of Pakistan's Cricket Board, Arif Abbasi, might have overdone it when he defended the team's manager, Intikhab Alam, in a newspaper spot in Karachi last week. Intikhab was quoted at length in *Dawn* newspaper saying that it would be perfectly reasonable and within the rules to lose two games and stay in Pakistan for the quarter-final.

Intikhab insisted afterwards that he had been "misquoted" but Abbasi went further, attributing the comment to a failure of English. The Anglo-Saxon language is very complicated, he explained. It is. But it is not likely that this played a part. The interviewer was a local reporter, and his conversation with Intikhab was conducted in Urdu. Maybe he was misquoted.

Not that Urdu is English-free; it is crammed with Anglo-Saxon borrowings. The ruling Shiv Sena party in Bombay has been busy changing the vile English names back to their folk-nationalist origins (Bombay to Mumbai, for instance), and it does this in a simple and dramatic way. On Wednesday, activists turned up with cans of black paint at Grant Road station and blotched out the signs. It is hard to imagine cricket's vocabulary becoming the subject for a similar effort. In the Urdu commentary on Pakistan television, the pundits frequently use English words for which there are no Urdu equivalents. It goes: Urdu Urdu Urdu Urdu Urdu mental fatigue Urdu Urdu Urdu Urdu team spirit Urdu Urdu Urdu Urdu the County grind. Cricket really is a universal language after all.

On the eve of today's historic match between India and Pakistan, the stadium in Bangalore looked like a cross between Cruts and a rifle range. Asians and labradors criss-crossed the pitch, while labourers climbed up what the papers were calling the "splendourous lights" as if they were palm trees. There's a lot of fervent talk about the wicket ("The curator pronounced the rectangle to be batsman-friendly," the paper said) but the groundsmen were keeping it under a carpet of loose grass clippings to keep it moist. The decisive security measure was the metal detector sweep. They didn't bother with the wicket, which had been the subject of pre-match threats, but they went carefully over every inch of the sponsor's red-and-white logo painted on the grass. First things first.

This week at the World Cup

Moment of the week

Ricbie Richardson's emotional greeting of the West Indies' victory against Australia after he had responded to the immense personal pressure on him following the humiliation against Kenya by compiling a tremendous match-winning innings of 93.

England's humiliation of the week

Things have reached some pass when a centre to a routine victory over England by Pakistan is actually seen as a dramatic improvement in the English side's performance – but such was the case after the two met in Karachi last Sunday.

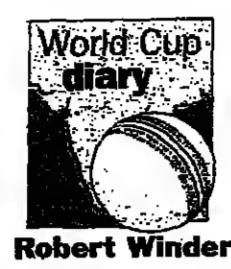
The story so far...

Group A
RESULTS: West Indies (156-5) bt Zimbabwe (151-9) by 5 wickets; Sri Lanka bt Australia (156-4) by 8 wickets; India (150-9) by 7 wickets; New Zealand (173) by 5 wickets; Sri Lanka (22-1) bt Zimbabwe (128-6) by 9 wickets; Australia (134-7) by 97 runs; Sri Lanka (156-5) bt Zimbabwe (137-5) by 9 runs; Kenya (124) by 5 wickets; Australia (156-4) bt Zimbabwe (142) by 15 runs; Australia (156-4) bt Zimbabwe (173) by 8 wickets; Sri Lanka (121-4) bt India (129-6) by 8 wickets; Sri Lanka (123-6) bt Australia (129-6) by 9 wickets; India (124-5) bt Zimbabwe (207) by 20 runs; Sri Lanka (196-5) bt Kenya (25-4) by 34 runs.

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	L	T	NR	pts	RR
Sri Lanka	5	5	0	0	0	10	1.64
Australia	5	3	2	0	0	6	0.88
West Indies	5	2	3	0	0	4	0.12
Zimbabwe	5	1	4	0	0	2	0.25
Kenya	5	1	4	0	0	2	0.95
Total	25	17	10	5	0	50	1.03

Group B
RESULTS: New Zealand (126-6) bt England (124-9) by 11 runs; South Africa (121-2) bt United Arab Emirates (125-8) by 183 runs; New Zealand (126-6) bt Zimbabwe (124-7) by 119 runs; England (140-2) bt United Arab Emirates (126) by 8 wickets; South Africa (178-5) bt New Zealand (117-7) by 61 runs; Zimbabwe (124-7) bt United Arab Emirates (124-9) by 122-11 by United Arab Emirates (109-9) by 9 wickets; South Africa (130) bt England (112) by 78 runs; Pakistan (151-2) bt Netherlands (145-7) by 8 wickets; New Zealand (127-



Robert Winder

■ ■ ■
May be Brian Lara, the world's choice as the West Indies captain – though not the West Indian cricket board's – is just preparing for the role by making a few public relations goofs even before he gets the job. When he hung around after the match against Kenya chatting to the triumphant Africans, he obviously didn't realise there was a reporter – some huffoon, probably – hanging around too. The repercussions about his remarks on South Africa and his own management could be serious. Sad, in a way – all this drowned out what could have been a sweet scene. "A few years back," Maurice Odumbe, Kenya's captain, said, "me and Steve Tikolo asked for your autograph, and you refused. You should take ours now." Any doubts about the reliability of the report can be laid to rest, though. The reporter in question has a knack for being first with the news. "Incidentally," he added at the end, "some news for Lara fans. He won't be playing county cricket this year." You read it here first.

■ ■ ■
As two nations held their breath over the outcome of today's India-Pakistan match, the players of both sides clinked orange and politely declined the sponsor's cigarettes at a pre-match function in Bangalore's swishiest hotel. Wasim Akram was just explaining how the muscle strain in his side was holding him back when Mohammad Azharuddin walked in. The Pakistan team, like nervous guests, were smartly dressed; India, with the laid-back slouchiness of hosts, wore poolside gear. "What's happened to Azhar's weight?" said Wasim. The two men shook hands, started chatting and bared scores of photographers knocked the glasses out of people's hands as they rushed to catch the scene. This was supposed to be Ali versus Frazier, and what was going on? These two looked like friends. Eventually they politely decided to sound tough. Did Wasim remember the last time he'd played here? "Yes," he said. "We won, I think." Whoosh! See those fists fly!

One of the great things about being a trainer is that you always seem to get a spanking kitchen thrown in. Richards's is typical. He too seems to have benefited from the Jockey Club's job lot of Agas and Welsh dressers, which are spread around a huge area. Classical music plays in the background.

There are pictures of the Boss and his horses, and little doubt who is top dog. While my cup, and that of Gordon's wife, Joanie, have space for one egg, the Boss is different. He eats his brace from a structure that looks like a cowboy-movie cactus.

Richards has liked One Man for longer than he has had him. He did the trainer's equivalent of a building-site wolf whistle when he was first shown the horse when he was in the care of his great friend W A (Arthur) Stephenson. Stephenson is no

RACING: The trainer of the favourite for the Cheltenham Gold Cup talks to Richard Edmondson

One Man a prince in Richards' realm

There is a horse at Gordon Richards's Greystoke yard in Cumbria that is different, and it is not just because he is grey.

"Nine out of 10 horses will come in and roll in their box, but this one never does," Richards said. "But if you put him out in the field that's the first thing he does." But neither is it for his leisure technique that the eight-year-old is most famous.

On the contrary, it is in the heat of racing's most testing furnace that the highest celebrity awaits One Man. If he wins the Cheltenham Gold Cup on Thursday, and the bookmakers consider the sash is already around his neck. One Man is likely to join the few superheroes that cross into the public domain, the likes of Arkle, Red Rum and Desert Orchid.

He will also complete one of the greatest training careers in National Hunt history. Gordon Richards, who will be 66 this year, is closing in on 2,000 winners after 30 years with a licence, and he has just about every major chasing rosette going. There is one hole in the tapestry though and it is awaiting the garland of the Gold Cup.

Greystoke may be little more than a village, but it has significance beyond its place in the atlas. This was originally the hub of an ancient harony, which included all Cumberland between Ingleside, Penrith and Keswick, before One Man once again made it a seat of power. It is a place few visit.

If you come from southern-southern direction towards Greystoke, the appreciation grows that you are entering a different land. Up over the top of Sheep, deer-warning signs start to appear at the side of the road, and in the fields, the greenery gives way to increasing patches of snow around the blasted sheep.

When I arrived, Richards had just finished a morning's work and was emerging from his off-road vehicle with a barrel of gas in his hand. The trainer was dressed in near Bavarian manner, with knee-length socks over his trousers. His grey hair was flat on his head, like a second skin. "Come in," Richards said. "We'll have an egg."

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Man at work: 'He has a lovely way of moving and when you canter on him he's a dream'

longer with us, but talk to Richards and you understand that One Man is running for two trainers on Thursday. "We always used to admire one another's horses," Richards said. "If he saw a novice of mine he liked he'd say 'ooh, you've been shopping well there, young fella'."

The Boss and W A may never have been in calculations for Gladialors, but they have always been thought of as hugely intimidating men. When they drank together at a bar, they were left alone; Richards, the diminutive chap from Somerset and W A, the man so ruddy and full of face that it would have been absurd for him not to have his Wellingtons turned down.

Richards is easy to lampoon with his West Country sighs, repeated phrases and shrugging of shoulders, but no man is brave enough to do it in his presence.

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Doubts over Draborgie's Arkle challenge

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Draborgie, widely regarded as one of the bankers for next week's Cheltenham Festival, may have to miss the meeting.

Martin Pipe, her trainer, confirmed yesterday evening that the mare, who was as short as 7-4 for her intended target, the Arkle Trophy, has had a setback.

Downbeat rumours about the mare's well-being came on racing's bush telegraph through the afternoon, prompting Coral, William Hill and Ladbrokes to suspend betting on the race.

Later, Pipe confirmed: "Draborgie worked this morning and did pull out a little bit stiff from her box, and we are reviewing the situation, it is as simple as that."

"We have got to wait and see how she gets on. We are never happy when things like this happen, but we will leave it until the day before the race before making a decision."

David Hood, of William Hill, reported: "There is no confidence in Draborgie in the betting market and there is also substantial support for those directly behind her in the market."

"We thought she would not run if there was fast ground at the Festival but there now seems some doubt as to whether she will run at all."

Bob Hartnett of Coral, added: "At Sandown, the race course was simply swimming in rumours about her. Bookmakers, trainers, everybody was talking about her. If she had been a 14-1 or 16-1 shot, you wouldn't have to worry too much, but given

her position at the head of the market, we had no option but to suspend betting."

Another absentee will be one of the great constants of the modern Festival, Jodami. He will miss Thursday's Gold Cup because of a bacterial infection.

Peter Beaumont's gelding has

quired to carry top weight, following Master Oats's withdrawal from the race.

In the other main Cheltenham races, Viking Flagship

was eased to 13-8 from 6-4 for

the Queen Mother Champion

Chase as the fast-ground per-

formers' Strong Platinum

Travado and Coulton came in

for support. The money was also

flying for Hotel Minella in the

Champion Hurdle, for which he

is among the Cathearth Chase

entries, but comes up against

only three opponents here.

Later on, General Rusty,

Charlie Mann's hopeful entry in

the Sun Alliance Chase and the

Gold Cup itself tackles some

names that used to belong to the

Festival, namely King Credo,

Buck Willow and Cuddy Dale.

General Rusty is to be ridden

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The smaller targets at Esther

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sport

Boardman is back in the saddle

FACE TO FACE

Britain's gold medal cyclist faces a hard season. He talked to Ian Stafford

something you realise as you sit in your garden, with the sun on your face, and you actually have time to reflect on the past four years. I now have a clearer direction, and feel more balanced about my career, and about life.

Outside a bicycle was perched against the side of a car while each alien filed past peering at it with reverence as if it were a dead king lying in state. Before one could utter the phrase: "Take me to your leader," the leader appeared, lean, fit and still pinching himself at his rapid ascendancy.

They all may have looked like extras from *The X-Files*, but in reality they were cyclists from the *Wiz*, including the leader, who turned out to be Olympic pursuit champion, Chris Boardman, who starts his major comeback tomorrow in the Paris-Nice race after his injury during last year's Tour de France.

Predicting an overall top 10 finish in the Tour, Boardman crashed out after just two and half minutes of the Prologue, on day one of a three-week race.

The Tour, of course, is the race that really matters. As Boardman says: "If the Olympics and the Tour were to be staged at the same time then, as far as I'm concerned – and most top riders would agree – there would be no contest. The Tour would always come first."

But after last year's disaster, following his early withdrawal from his debut the year before, Boardman has yet to complete the race. Unnerved by previous experiences, Boardman predicts a different story this time: "My objectives in the Tour will be the same as last year's – to finish in the top 10, and to wear the yellow jersey for as long as I can. The only difference is that I won't be so reckless this time and crash in the rain. If that sounds ambitious, you've got to remember that I finished second to Miguel Indurain in last



The wheel thing: Chris Boardman, outside the Eureka Café, contemplates winning the Paris-Nice race on his major comeback tomorrow

year's Dauphiné Libéré, which is France's second biggest race. So this is a reasonable goal."

Two days after the finish in the Champs-Elysées, Boardman flies to Atlanta to prepare for his attempt to win the Olympic time trials towards the end of the Games in August. The thought of claiming another part of my brain was standing back and saying: "God, I can't believe you've just said that," I said these things because if you looked at my performances and times then it was clear that I could win the gold medal, but another part was telling me that only other people win the Olympics."

Back in 1992, Boardman was quite happy to let his unique bike from Lotus hog much of the limelight. "I was the first British competitor at the Games to win a gold medal. People just seemed to love the space-shuttle technology," he said. "But people kept making the analogy between me riding that bike, and a Formula One driver handling the best car."

It was at the Olympics, of course, when the Boardman story really began. "It may seem like yesterday to most people, but so much has happened to me since the 1992 Games that it seems like a lifetime to me," he said.

His transformation, from unemployed cabinet-maker, to international cyclist, has been remarkable, even more so

when you consider his attitude just four years ago.

"When I was being interviewed in Barcelona, I heard these things coming out of my mouth, statements like 'I'm only here for one medal.' As I was making these comments another part of my brain was standing back and saying: 'God, I can't believe you've just said that.'

I said these things because

opposition was riding, which was a carbon-fibre, monocoque frame, just like mine.

"It was slightly irritating that the bike may have taken a little away from what I had achieved, which is why I used a more conventional bike for the one-hour record."

The world one-hour record is the blue ribbon of the sport. Francesco Moser had held this record since 1984 but, just a week before Boardman made his attempt, an amateur from Scotland called Graeme Obree, riding a home-made bike, smashed the record in Norway.

"It certainly took the edge off the attempt because I suddenly found myself trying to break Obree's record, and not Moser's," Boardman said.

"What made it worse was that Obree diluted the one-hour record. He made a big point of emphasising how he likes to drink beer and eat marmalade sandwiches before he races, giving the impression that anyone could break it. The record lost a lot of its kudos as a result."

"It was entirely within the rules, but after I had announced a date for my record

attempt, he suddenly went for it the week before, which, to say the least, I found annoying. People always try and lump us together, which I don't like, because we are very different people, with very different approaches to our sport. I use scientific and technological methods in training and racing,

while Obree uses very individual methods. But he's very talented, if eccentric."

Still, it took a lot of convincing, particularly when Boardman was on the verge of quitting cycling into his professional career with the French team Giga. "I'd gone from a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a ocean and it was hard to take," he said.

"I'll never forget the Critérium International in France. I was going flat out up a climb in a 20-strong peloton when, suddenly, to the day, I was wearing the Tour's yellow jersey, but back then he probably didn't know who the hell I was."

"I bet nearly all of the Tour peloton didn't know of care

whether I could make this work, but then I found myself sitting in a London hotel watching a rep trying to sell his product to another guy across the table. I thought 'That's not me'. That's when I knew I just

had to do it. Once I accepted it, it all became easier."

He won a couple of stages of the Tour of Mercia, and suddenly discovered that he could mix it with the best. Success followed in the 1994 Tour when, making his debut, Boardman took the prologue and held on to the yellow jersey for three days before winning the day.

Two World Championship titles (pursuit and time trial), coincided a successful campaign in which Boardman finally arrived and gained respect among the professional ranks.

Despite his injury-enforced absence, his fellow riders in the peloton now know precisely who Chris Boardman is.

He has come a long way. But as he says his goodbye to the Eureka Café aliens, and prepares to drive home with his wife, Sally, and baby Oscar, the youngest of his four children, Chris Boardman acknowledges that his potential achievements this year could put everything else in the shade.

"Along as I don't fall off my bike again it could be a very good year," he concludes. Indeed it could.

Photograph: Peter Jay

Win Damon Hill's Renault Spider

with THE INDEPENDENT



Today is the final day of our Renault Spider prize draw. We would like to give you the chance to win a unique open-topped sports car that has had one careful owner - Damon Hill, Damon, hotly tipped to take this year's Grand Prix crown from Michael Schumacher, will road test our prize Renault Sport Spider, a magnificent mid-engine two seater that was the hit of the Geneva Motor Show. The Spider, which will retail for around £25,000, has a light-weight aluminium chassis and a 150 bhp 2 litre Clio Williams engine which gives a top speed of 130 mph. Though the Spider's high-tech interior and racy, squat lines show its race track pedigree, this is a car that was designed for everyday use. Safety is a prime feature, as is driver comfort and noise reduction.

Acceleration, road-holding, cornering and breaking are all that you would expect from a designer thoroughbred. Production of the Spider will be strictly limited, and your prize car will carry the Damon Hill seal of approval.

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning our prize Renault Sport Spider you must collect five differently numbered tokens from the fourteen we have printed in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday. Today we are printing our final token, Token 14, along with the entry form. It must be completed and sent in with your tokens.

Renault Spider

TOKEN 14

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As previously published.

THE INDEPENDENT Renault Spider entry form

Send your completed entry form, along with 5 differently numbered tokens to: The Independent / Renault Spider Prize Draw, PO Box 33, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TT. Closing date is 2 April 1996.

SECTION 1

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It would help The Independent if you could tell us about any newspaper or your partner buy, by ticking the appropriate boxes below for both your Daily and Sunday purchases. Put a tick against papers you have delivered in the columns 'Delivered at home'. For papers you buy yourself, please indicate how often you buy by ticking against the relevant papers in either the 'Bought most days' or 'Bought occasionally' columns.

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Devereux must display pioneering spirit

John Devereux goes into today's Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final as a man with a foot in both rugby camps.

The Widnes winger, crucial to their chances against St Helens at Central Park, is the man who has spanned a gap that once seemed unbridgeable. Not only is he by far the most valuable player on Widnes' books he is also the jewel in the crown of the Regal Rugby Union club.

The deal that will set the two codes share their services gives Devereux a special place in rugby history. A number of clubs and individuals have toyed with the idea – indeed, no week goes by without new rumours of the barricades being crossed – but only Widnes and Devereux have taken the bait.

When he finishes his summer season with Widnes, he will pick up the threads of a union career that were severed when, in traditional manner, he came north from Bridgend in 1983.

"I suppose that makes me a bit of a pioneer, but I don't think it has got the media coverage it deserves," he said. "If it had been Jonathan Davies or Martin Offiah it would have been front-page news. But it's John Devereux and it has gone largely unnoticed."

The arrangement, which he describes as "giving me some-

thing to look forward to in the cold winter months", came about after Sale – always a club with a healthy respect for league – made a generalised approach to Widnes.

The Widnes coach saw the trouble with that argument is that, when Cup rugby is on the agenda, Widnes can rediscover much of their old potency.

That has been evident during this season's Challenge Cup run, but even more so when they went agonisingly close to beating Wigan in the Regal Trophy.

Devereux, who played and toured with the Sale player-coach, Paul Turner, during his union days, is looking forward to his return to his old code in September. Those thoughts are, however, strictly on the back-burner during another six months of league, starting with today's semi-final. "I don't have any problems keeping the two separate," he said. "It's just like closing one book and opening another."

The plot of today's book is generally presumed to consist of St Helens taking the one remaining step to Wembley. Widnes are, after all, a mere shadow of their old selves, stuck outside the Super League elite in the First Division, and Saints.

With impeccable timing, St Helens will put their "dream team" three-quarter line on to the field for the first time in today's Challenge Cup semi-final against Widnes at Wigan, writes Dave Hadfield.

Alan Hunt's return after 10 months allows Saints to field the back line they envisaged when they broke the world transfer record for Paul Newlove last year.

It looks full of tries, so it is no wonder that Widnes, bidding to become the first club to reach a Wembley final, have been putting the emphasis on defence this week.

Perhaps the player with the most demanding job is their Australian centre, Mike Peckey, who will mark Newlove. "I

know I'm going to have my hands full, because he is a first-class player," Peckey said. "But I haven't thought too much about him, beyond thinking that I want to give him some problems as well."

If Saints' attacking prowess is beyond question then the issue of how they will handle being Cup favourites is more problematic. The absence of Wigan from the equation gives them the most inviting of opportunities, but it also puts extra pressure on them to succeed.

Their coach, Sham McRae, has discouraged any mention of Wembley in the build-up to the semi-final. "I just think it's premature. We have got a job to do for 80 minutes and that is what we need to focus upon," he said.

McRae showed what a de-



Devereux: Asset to two codes

"But we are under no pressure," Devereux said. "We have already exceeded all expectations by getting this far, but St Helens expect to go on and win it – so all the pressure is on them."

There will be pressure of a different sort on Devereux when he becomes rugby's first time-share player. League people will scrutinise him on his return from Sale for signs of weariness or, maybe worse, of bad habits picked up from union.

Not surprisingly, he is firmly of the view that one activity will benefit the other. "We should get away from this idea that rugby players play for a few months of the year and put their feet up for the rest of the year. Pre-season training can be a lot harder than playing matches."

There are a lot more matches to play before Devereux starts that other season. Widnes need him to be all rugby league player against St Helens.

through their forwards, who despite a lack of big names, have shown that they are capable of rising to a big occasion. That, in turn, throws the spotlight on Saints' pack, still a few notches behind their backs in reputation.

One prop, Apollo Perelini, was outstanding against Salford, but equally significant today could be how the 18-year-old Andy Leatham copes with the situation.

Kurt Sorensen has resigned as coach of Workington, whose future is uncertain after the collapse of a takeover bid.

Barrie McDermott, the Leeds and Great Britain prop, has been charged with criminal damage and obstructing the police after becoming the first person in the country to be arrested using a CS gas spray.

I want to enjoy this championship... and to win it

Already this season, many people regard me as the favourite to win the championship and I intend to do everything in my power to make that dream become a reality. This is my third attempt to capture the title, after successive second placings, and I am confident that with the superb Williams-Renault team behind me, the prospects look very good.

The season starts in Melbourne tomorrow and, from what I have seen at Estoril, the competition is going to be incredibly fierce. But I came away from testing in Portugal feeling good in myself and reassured in the knowledge that with the superb Williams team behind me, the prospects look very good.

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After the highs and lows of last year, there has been a lot to think about. While we had a number of setbacks, all the ingredients were there and, over the winter, we have had a chance to hone the operation into shape. Nothing has been overlooked. If 1995 achieved one thing, it was a strengthening of the desire to win the championship and we have examined absolutely every aspect of running the team from reliability to pit stops to very small details which are crucial in a sport where each one-hundredth of a second counts.

For once, I have had time at home, which I really value. In the

six finishers in last year's championship have swapped teams. While a change of teams can be exciting, having the continuity with such a first-rate team as Williams has many benefits. We know our strengths and weaknesses and the winter has been spent building on the former and dealing with the latter.

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winter of 1994-95, I was globetrotting on a promotional tour but, this time, I was able to sit back with my family and get to know my children. After recovering from the shock of having a strange man in the house, I think they took to me quite well.

I now have my own gym at home, which makes regular preparation simpler and more time-efficient. I have always trained hard but the problem has not been quantity; it's the attention to detail which I am hoping will make the difference. I am looking for a five to 10 per cent improvement in all-round performance but, as always, it's the final few per cent which present the greatest challenge.

I certainly feel different and I achieved that after working much more closely with the team's physio and trainer, Erwin Goellner. He took me off to a clinic in Austria, where I think his main ambition was to test my sense of humour. I had to run flat out on a treadmill while

a doctor stuck pins in my ear and took blood to test my lactic acid levels. Believe me, if you can laugh after that, you should be able to laugh at anything. Another part of

the test involved a reaction time assessment in which I came out top out of the 25,000 sports people who have been tested; I consider that a good result, to say the least...

I attach a great deal of importance to enjoying what I am doing. Of course, if I'm having a hard time in a race, then I'm going to look upset at the end of it; I wouldn't be a competitive person if I didn't fail or be cheered off by failing to win. But I want to enjoy this championship. There is nothing I would like more than to have some great races and win the championship.

But it would be wrong to raise hopes too high this early because all sorts of twists and turns lie ahead. The one certainty is that no particular driver-car combination stands out as being head and shoulders above the rest.

Naturally, everyone asks me about Michael Schumacher and his move to Ferrari. I think reliability will be the biggest question mark,

particularly with the engine. In any case, I think it's too limiting to talk only in terms of Michael. There is going to be a strong challenge from Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger at Benetton-Renault. And, of course, I have my new team-mate, Jacques Villeneuve, who, I believe, has more than enough ability to handle F1.

Jacques has already done more than 9,000 miles of testing in last year's car. He comes from Indycar as the reigning champion, as well as winner of last year's Indianapolis 500, so he's obviously a very quick and competitive driver.

The first race in Melbourne is a new venue, which means we all start from scratch when practice begins on Thursday morning.

Everyone must also get used to a new timetable which now dictates a single qualifying session on Saturday afternoon. Previously, the times established on Friday afternoon also counted towards grid

positions. I think this is a new dimension which will add a great deal to the excitement. I have to admit that I never really felt comfortable with the Friday qualifying session because you would do your best but you wouldn't know if that was going to be good enough 24 hours later. Now it's a one-shot situation which gives every driver the opportunity to channel all his ability and aggression into a more concentrated action-packed one-hour session.

It's true to say that, at this time each year, you go into the championship believing it's the best chance you've got and 1996 is no different, particularly as I can draw on a more comprehensive bank of experience. I'm in a better position to enjoy my racing and, come the 16th and final grand prix in Japan in October, I want to have achieved something I can be really proud of. The team is ready, I'm ready. Here's to an exciting and memorable season.



Damon Hill, who will write a column in the *Independent* after every grand prix, looks ahead to the season

Schumacher's drive for fulfilment

This season will test Germany's world champion, says **Derick Allison**

Michael Schumacher fixed his eyes on the old newspaper cutting and smiled resignedly. Had he changed since he first appeared in Formula One, four and a half years ago? "I certainly change my hair, and my face," said the leaner, sleeker German.

The expression of the 27-year-old altered as he acknowledged the sport had accelerated the ageing process.

"I have got older a lot quicker during my Formula One career," he said. "And sure, I have changed as a person. I have grown up, and developed myself. Some people think in the right direction, some in the wrong direction, but I have developed the way I wanted to. I have more understanding about things."

Schumacher has experienced the emotional extremes of a life-time since he made his Formula One debut, for Jordan-Ford, in the 1991 Belgian Grand Prix. He has been catapulted to the peak of his profession, becoming Germany's first world champion and the youngest double winner of motor racing's ultimate prize. A contract with Ferrari understood to be worth £21m (£16.8m) a year is testimony to his stature.

There has, however, been a heavy burden to bear. He soon discovered that privacy is a priceless and unattainable luxury at this level. Controversy and suspicion, on the other hand, have been constant companions. He has had confrontations with the authorities and his main rival, Damon Hill.

And yet these incidents have been little more than irritations compared with the traumatic realisation that grand prix racing can still kill. The death of Ayrton Senna made him agonise over his future. So, too, did Mika Hakkinen's serious accident in practice for the final race of last season, in Australia.

Schumacher admits he had to be persuaded by his boss, at Benetton-Renault, Flavio Briatore, and Formula One's impresario, Bernie Ecclestone, to get back into his car at Adelaide.

"Flavio was afraid I wouldn't get into the car at all," he said, "and



Michael Schumacher (left) with Gerhard Berger after practice yesterday for tomorrow's Australian Grand Prix. Photograph: Claire Mackintosh/Empics

took me to Bernie, who showed me the pictures from the onboard camera.

"This showed Mika had a mechanical failure and therefore I was able to get in the car again. But I had seen that if a driver as good as Mika could make a mistake and the result was so serious, then I could make a mistake as well. I would have the same risk as Mika. When you get older you think more about these things."

That revelation should not be misinterpreted as a loss of nerve.

Schumacher has always known the team he did at Benetton, John Barnard, Ferrari's English designer, has been coaxed out from his Surrey lair to involve himself more in on-track activity in compliance with the No 1 driver's requirements.

Schumacher, who makes his

debut in the scarlet car at Melbourne tomorrow, has prepared himself and everyone else for reliability problems this season, propelled as he is by a new V10 engine. "We cannot expect to win the championship this year," he said. "We have been getting to know each other and learning how to work with each other. We have a new car and engine, but putting all these things together takes time. It is more realistic to think about the championship in 1997."

Already, however, you sense Schumacher is galvanising the team the way he did at Benetton. John Barnard, Ferrari's English designer, has been coaxed out from his Surrey lair to involve himself more in on-track activity in compliance with the No 1 driver's requirements.

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He takes the view he is straight talking. He makes no apologies, especially to Damon Hill, for being ruthless. "Sure I am," he said. "I am also twice world champion and Damon has twice been second."

The British driver, outgunned in the verbal skirmishes as well as in the racing, has declared himself uninterested in anything Schumacher has to say, but the flow of words coming towards him has not dried up.

He is right, of course. But then that is a measure of Schumacher's reputation. No other

current driver commands comparable respect.

Ferrari's public teething problems with their new car have further eased the expectations. There are, however, precedents for an unlikely first-race victory. Schumacher managed very little running with Ford's Zetec R engine before the 1994 season, but won the opener in Brazil. Nigel Mansell was so convinced his Ferrari would fail in his debut with the team at Brazil in 1989 he missed it because the car kept going and finished first.

It appears highly improbable, but if Schumacher wins the championship again this year it will, as Briatore says, be down to him. It will also be just about the greatest success of them all.

Briatore, under pressure to keep Benetton at the top without Schumacher, suggests his former driver has manoeuvred himself into a snug position this year: "If Michael wins the championship, he will get all the credit for it. If he doesn't, it will be Ferrari's fault."

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GRAND PRIX TEAM GUIDE

JORDAN-PERGOLZI

1 Michael Schumacher (Ger)

Age 27. Grands prix 69. Wins 0.

2 Eddie Irvine (N Ire)

Age 30. GP 32. Wins 0.

All their new investments and the arrival of Schumacher, the Italian team say they do not expect to challenge for the world title this season and testing problems with the new car appear to justify their caution. With the German world champion on board, however, anything is possible and they should become a force to be reckoned with by the end of the year.

SAUERFORD

14 Johnny Herbert (GB)

Age 31. GP 60. Wins 0.

15 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Ger)

Age 28. GP 32. Wins 0.

A team facing the prospect of limbo. They lost their Ford deal to Stewart next season, but have an outstanding talent in Frentzen.

FOOTWORK-HART

16 Jos Verstappen (Neth)

Age 24. GP 15. Wins 0.

17 Ricardo Rosset (bra)

Age 27. GP 0. Wins 0.

Few teams are as consistent. Year after year they produce virtually nothing, and this year you can bet they will produce virtually nothing.

TYRRELL-YAMAHA

18 Ayuki Kubatayama (Japan)

Age 32. GP 62. Wins 0.

19 Mika Salo (Fin)

Age 29. GP 19. Wins 0.

Another team seemingly stuck in a mid-field groove and needing fresh momentum. Salo has talent, but Kubatayama is not a man to put your money on.

MARSHAL-FORD

20 Pedro Lamy (Por)

Age 23. GP 16. Wins 0.

21 Giacomo Rinaldi (It)

Age 23. GP 0. Wins 0.

A team always short of cash, always limping along, and the little prospect of a change for the better this season.

FORTI-FORD

22 Andrea Montermini (It)

Age 21. GP 17. Wins 0.

23 Luca Badoer (It)

Age 25. GP 29. Wins 0.

Surprised a lot of people by surviving for a second season, but perhaps they merely have a stay of execution.

GRAND PRIX CALENDAR

March 10: Australia (Melbourne); 31: Brazil (Interlagos); April 3: Argentina (Buenos Aires); 28: Europe (Nurburgring); May 6: San Marino (Imola); 19: Monaco (Monte Carlo); June 2: Spain (Barcelona); 16: Canada (Montreal); 30: France (Magny-Cours); July 4: Britain (Silverstone); 28: Germany (Hockenheim); August 11: Hungary (Budapest); 25: Belgium (Spa-Francorchamps); September 8: Italy (Monza); 22: Portugal (Estoril); October 13: Japan (Suzuka).

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

■ Although I was the best heavyweight you had here and [Henry] Cooper wasn't fit to walk in [London's] Olympic Stadium, I still beat him. Joe Bugner, former British heavyweight champion, on the comeback trail.

■ I give him a clubber's chance. He is an expert rabbit-puncher so one of them may come through his mouth. Let me tell you, I am not Frank Bruno's chances of holding on to his World Boxing Council title.

■ What matters is that he's so big now, so massive I can't miss him and I'll be throwing punches with bad intention. I am in a no-win situation. Mike Tyson.

■ The best seemed to run for me and to run away from me. I had a game like the kind of which only comes along once in a blue moon. Dean Richards, England's Inspiration against Scotland in the Nations' Championship on Saturday.

■ In the first half, Man United were hammered 0-0. Kevin Keegan, Newcastle United manager, reflects on what might have been in the crucial Premiership match which Newcastle lost 1-0.

■ I can say that I need to bring the match to the last minute. If he wins again, maybe as big an amount. Referee Maricello Carvalho who abandoned an Italian Second Division match in favour of a Serie A game.

■ I would treat my dog the way I have been treated. People have been laying the blame at my door for everything, from the washing machine breaking down to the supposedly demanding half a million pounds each week. Steve Carrington, parting shot at Birmingham after finally completing his on-off £2.2m move to Leicester.

TODAY

Football

FA CUP: 11.00: Chelsea v West Ham; 12.30: Liverpool v Derby County; 14.00: Aston Villa v Nottingham Forest; 15.30: Manchester United v Southampton; 16.00: Newcastle United v Crystal Palace; 17.30: Middlesbrough v Coventry City; 18.00: West Ham v Birmingham City; 19.00: Liverpool v Nottingham Forest; 20.00: Newcastle United v Crystal Palace; 21.00: Middlesbrough v Coventry City; 22.00: West Ham v Birmingham City; 23.00: Liverpool v Nottingham Forest; 24.00: Newcastle United v Crystal Palace; 25.00: Middlesbrough v Coventry City; 26.00: West Ham v Birmingham City; 27.00: Liverpool v Nottingham Forest; 28.00: Newcastle United v Crystal Palace; 29.00: Middlesbrough v Coventry City; 30.00: West Ham v Birmingham City; 31.00: Liverpool v Nottingham Forest; 32.00: Newcastle United v Crystal Palace; 33.00: M

sport

McAteer lives out his dream

The sounds would have sent a wave of revulsion through the Kop. Steve McManaman rose for a header and as the ball sailed through the posts he repeated a mantra from his Evertonian childhood: "Latchford". On another pitch a Liverpool apprentice bent a long shot from the right to the accompaniment of "and Whiteside wins the FA Cup".

Recalled phrases from long ago. Players can commit heart and soul to clubs but retain affections from the past. Melwood, Liverpool's training ground, echoed to vocal souvenirs tossed up partly as an act of remembrance, partly to goad their companions. It was grand heresy at a place where the club's pulse is supposed to beat.

To no one more so than Jason McAteer. When he shuts his eyes and imagines his heroes, the vision is ablaze with red. Kenny Dalglish reigns above all others but just below are other Anfield deities like Ian Rush and John Barnes. At 24, he has achieved a schoolboy's dream, he plays for the team he lived for as a youth and even with players he idolised. He is Liverpool through and through.

McAteer's feeling that he is a round peg in an appropriately shaped hole since his £4.5m move from Bolton last autumn does not end there. A win over Leeds United at Elland Road tomorrow will push his club to within two matches of winning the FA Cup while the reeling in Newcastle United at the top of the Premiership has accelerated. There are whispers of the Double on Merseyside.

McAteer, the supporter, hears and enjoys such talk: McAteer, the player, is surprised the expectation is having so little effect on his colleagues. "The thing I've learnt these few months at Liverpool is that they never talk about not winning anything. The season is never written off. They always believe they can win things so what pressure there is becomes a way of life. Even so there's a lot up for grabs and it's getting exciting."

Which is the opposite of how things were when he gained a permanent place in the team. Fired in several roles, his settling-in period coincided with Liverpool's slump in November when they went out of the UEFA and Coca-Cola Cups and were trailing Newcastle by 14 points. McAteer had achieved his ambition but it was turning sour.

"If we lose I feel it more here," he said. "Even when I was at Bolton I'd be gutted if Liverpool got beaten but now, when I've been part of that de-

Guy Hodgson talks to the player who is Liverpool through and through.

It's far worse. The sooner part comes out of me, I can't wait for the next game to make amends. November was a terrible month. I'd just gone into the side and we kept losing.

The decision to try him as a right wing-back, coupled with better form and fortune, turned things round completely. Liverpool are unbeaten in 16 matches and McAteer has become such a fixture that Rob Jones, the England right back, has had to switch to the left. It has surprised the player and his manager. Roy Evans.

He had envisaged his new signing as a central midfield player who occasionally took to the flank as a conventional

winger. That would have entailed scrapping the three-centre-back system that has become Evans' tactical trademark and when it came to it McAteer had to adapt. To the player's astonishment, he enjoys the role.

"I love it," he said. "When I came I wanted to play in the middle but I soon realised that playing central midfield at Bolton is very different to playing central midfield for Liverpool. It's a passing game here whereas, at Bolton, I was running at players and getting beyond defenders. If I tried that now I'd be duplicating what Steve McManaman does for us to a certain extent."

"Defensively I've been helped a lot by Mark Wright. He's the centre-back who covers my flank and gives me confidence to get forward but if I do have to tuck in he tells me to, telling me where to be, where to push opposition players. He's a world-class defender and I owe him a lot. I feel I'm learning something every day."

By accident McAteer seems to have found his niche. "We're getting a lot of chances from his crosses," Evans said, "and he's doing the defensive bit very well. The only problem was Rob Jones but he's doing a job for us on the left even if it's not his preferred position."

Evans, McAteer acknowledg-

edges, has had a beneficial effect on him just as Bruce Rioch, his erstwhile manager at Bolton, moulded him from a promising youngster to a Republic of Ireland international. Rioch, he says, was a father figure to him; his new boss is performing a similar function.

"Roy Evans is more laid back," he said. "The difference is that Bruce, when he arrived at Bolton, had a lot more to do. He had to start from scratch and lay the law down. He was stricter but he had to be to establish principles. The gaffer has been here for years and he knows how this ship runs."

Both are determined men who want to win things. That's the best quality I've seen in both of them. They have a drive about them. Bruce would come down like a ton of bricks on anyone who stepped out of line but it's the same here. We're professionals after all and you're expected to behave. When you are 35 you can drink as much as you want. You've been given a chance now so why spoil it?"

Leeds could spoil at least half of Liverpool's ambitions this season in the FA Cup sixth round at Elland Road tomorrow - just as they hampered the championship campaign by beating them there at the start of the season. Then the visitors were the better team but were shot down by a clap of thunder known as Tony Yeboah's right boot.

McAteer, coming to an end of 18 months of transfer speculation at Bolton, watched that match on television. "We were unlucky that night. We played well but were beaten by one piece of magic. Things have changed a lot since then. Liverpool's team is different and so is Leeds'. They looked good then but when they came to Anfield we beat them 5-0. We've not lost since."

The irony being that, had things turned out differently, McAteer could be playing for the opposition tomorrow. "Leeds enquired about me at one time," he said, "I think everyone stuck their noses in at one point or other. But when it came to the crunch it was down to a choice between Blackburn, Arsenal and Liverpool."

"The financial gain was never an issue. When I was having talks I didn't even go in the room when the financial bit came out. It didn't bother me at all. My heart said Liverpool and I had to think rationally and listen to Arsenal and Blackburn. Looking back though, it was always going to be Liverpool."

With him it usually is.



McAteer believes Liverpool can beat Leeds in the FA Cup at Elland Road tomorrow

Photograph: Tony Marshall/Empics

Caledonian wary of Rangers' reputation

Scottish football

Caledonian Thistle, the Third Division club from Inverness who are barely 18 months into their Scottish League history, face Rangers star-studded team today for a place in the Tennent's Scottish Cup semi-finals.

The match, played at Dundee United's Tannadice Park ground, is a tie which captures all the romance of the Cup, but Thistle's manager, Steve Paterson, a one-time Manchester United player, is fearful the love affair may turn sour.

"At five to three I will be very apprehensive wondering what is

going to happen," Paterson said. "My ideal would be to contain Rangers at least until half-time. I'd consider losing 1-0 as containing them," he said.

Rangers will unleash Ally McCoist from the start but the new Danish striker Erik Bo Andersen is ineligible. Richard Gough, Stuart McCall and Ian Ferguson are out injured but Alex Cleland is in the squad.

In tomorrow's other quarter-final, Cup specialists Airdrie go to Aberdeen, the Coca-Cola Cup holders, Aberdeen have their captain, Stewart McKinlay, out injured but Dean Windass and Duncan Shearer are added to Roy Aitken's squad.

At five to three I will be very apprehensive wondering what is

FA CUP FIFTH-ROUND REPLAY

Tottenham v Nottingham Forest
Skipper Mabbutt plays his 600th game for Tottenham, who have Sinton cupped and Donkin suspended. Peter Taylor is again doubtful with an ankle injury so Glade is set to continue in attack. Nottingham Forest expect skipper Pearce to be fit despite suffering stiffness in his calf after returning in the UEFA Cup defeat by Bayam Munich. The Cup survivor cannot make it. Alan Smith, Steve Watson and Woan are nursing knee injuries. Cooper (elbow) and Silenzio (virus) are both definite non-starters.

SIXTH ROUND

Chelsea v Wimbledon
Spencer and Peacock will be hoping to win back their places from Spack and Furkog as Chelsea bid to reach the semi-finals for the second time in three seasons. Striker Pilkington, a target for a number of clubs, has recovered from the bout of flu which caused him to miss last week's dress rehearsal at Selhurst Park but may have to settle for a place on the substitutes' bench.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Aston Villa v QPR
Midfielder Draper has recovered from an ankle injury, so manager Little has

TEAM NEWS

to decide whether to recall him or replace him by promising Scrimme, Steven and Taylor. Steer almost certain to be missing and Johnson is doubtful with a thigh strain. Struggling Rangers, who lost to Leeds in midweek, are expected to recall experienced campaigner McDonald in place of Ruddy. Rennie returns after suspension in place of Challis.

Everton v Coventry

Hughton will make his Everton debut just two days after his 21st birthday. He will replace younger O'Connor at right-back. Short takes over from hamstring victim Watson in the final of last year's 2-2 draw against another of his former teams, West Ham. Another ex-Evertonian, midfield man Richardson, is missing through suspension.

West Ham v Middlesbrough

Brasilean Juninho could be recalled by Middlesbrough after returning from an Olympic qualifying tournament in Argentina, and compatriot Branco may

make his first start although he still lacks match fitness. Skipper Pearson returns after a two-match suspension, but central defender Vickery is ruled out by a calf strain. The best Dumfries can hope for is a place on the bench for his first appearance in England. His absence has granted a work permit. West Ham manager Redknapp is keeping everyone guessing about his starting line-up, now that he has a large squad available following the return to fitness of Moncur and Bresciano.

TOMORROW

FA CUP SIXTH ROUND

Leeds v Liverpool

Welsh international midfielder Speed wants to return to action just two days after his right knee suffered a broken injury. Defenders duo Dorigo (hamstring) and Kelly (knee) face late fitness tests. Manager Wilkinson will delay naming his side. Pemberton, fit again after a three-month lay-off, is unlikely to be risked as Leeds are desperate to go through to the semi-finals. Wembley, the venue for the final of the season, Fowler will be hoping to press his England claims further as in-form Liverpool

defender Wright can shrug off a groin injury.

Malkin transfer on hold after medical

Chris Malkin's £400,000 transfer from Millwall to Charlton

player with a broken leg, 10 booked and two sent off - one

by mistake. Gillingham and Fulham were found guilty of misconduct by the FA, but were cleared of a charge of failing to control their players. Sentence was deferred until next week.

The Dutch mid-fielder

Richard Stoeckel has agreed to leave. Premiership strugglers Bolton and join First Division West Bromwich Albion.

The two clubs, both fighting relegation battles, settled on a fee of around £400,000 earlier in the week. After further talks with Albion yesterday, the player finally agreed and the deal will go through subject to a routine medical.

Derby County have paid £400,000 for Ben Dixon, the Lincoln left-back. Birmingham, who had agreed a fee for Dixon and Matt Carbone, have abandoned their interest in the latter.

Fulham will have to wait to learn their punishment for their part in a fracas last November at Gillingham, which left one

player with a broken leg. 10

booked and two sent off - one

by mistake. Gillingham and

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tine medical.

This, apparently, is considered a fun night out in Gillingham.

Hedblom bruised a rib

and then caught pneumonia.

"I'm not afraid of getting injured," said Hedblom, who used

to play ice hockey. "I like to do things. You have to have fun. Tomorrow you could get hit by a car. Life's too short."

Ian Woosnam, who would

probably sympathise with such

a philosophy, held a 60-yard

wedge shot for an eagle three at

the eighth in a round of 73.

Woosnam, the leader of the

Order of Merit after winning

the first two events of the season,

the Johnnie Walker Classic and the

Heineken Classic, is at one over

par on 145. It is not exactly a scintillating score but Ballesteros

would have happily settled for it.

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SPORT

Gullit and Jones on collision course

Football

GUY HODGSON

There is no pay-per-view yet for the quarter-finals of the FA Cup which does not mean the last four allowed to dream of twin towers will not be decided without cost. On what should be a showpiece day for football's glamour competition the action is diluted to quarter strength.

At most only one semi-final will be discovered today and while the weather has been responsible for Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest having to play out the drags of the fifth round, the chief culprit for the lack of action as ever is television.

The tie of the round, Leeds United versus Liverpool, is played tomorrow while Manchester United do not meet Southampton until Monday night which means the only quarter-final today will be Chelsea against Wimbledon. The words short and changed come to mind for some reason.

Wimbledon were quoted as 20/1 for the Cup yesterday which represents good value as they won at Chelsea in the Premiership earlier this season and caused them considerable problems in the dress rehearsal at Selhurst Park last week. It is a measure of the confidence running through the visitors that Dean Holdsworth, their top scorer in the League, will probably be on the bench after recovering from flu.

There is also the potentially explosive mixture of Chelsea's Ruud Gullit and Wimbledon's Vinnie Jones on the same pitch which passed without incident last week but is unlikely to do so for two matches running. Jones, it should be remembered, was sent off for fouling the Dutchman earlier in the season and was fined for making derogatory remarks about him.

At White Hart Lane, the identity of the team to play host to Aston Villa in the sixth round on Wednesday could rest on the fitness of Nottingham Forest's

Swiss signing for City

Manchester City have added a Swiss-born Italian to their list of foreigners by signing Giuseppe Mazzarelli from FC Zurich.

The midfielder impressed during a reserve match for City on Wednesday and convinced the City chairman, Francis Lee, to give him a chance. But the deal is subject to assorted clauses and means that 22-year-old Mazzarelli has until the end of the season to prove his worth.

"A fee has been agreed but it is a lot of money so it could be subject to us being con-

vinced he is the quality player we think he is," Lee said.

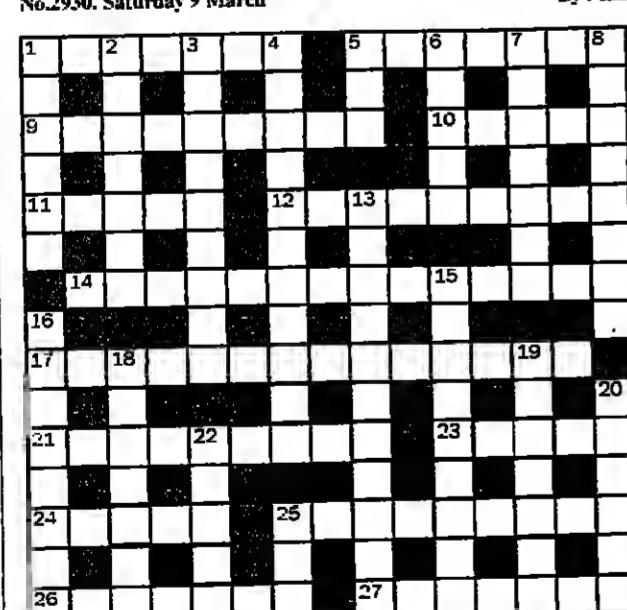
"We have only watched him in one reserve game and we will have to wait a little longer to see his qualities. But I have no doubt having seen him play that he is a player of terrific skills and great quality and he will let us down."

The Georgian striker Mikhail Kavashvili has returned to the Russian champions, Spartak Vladikavkaz, 10 days after a move away from training with City last week.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No.2930. Saturday 9 March

By Mass



Friday's solution

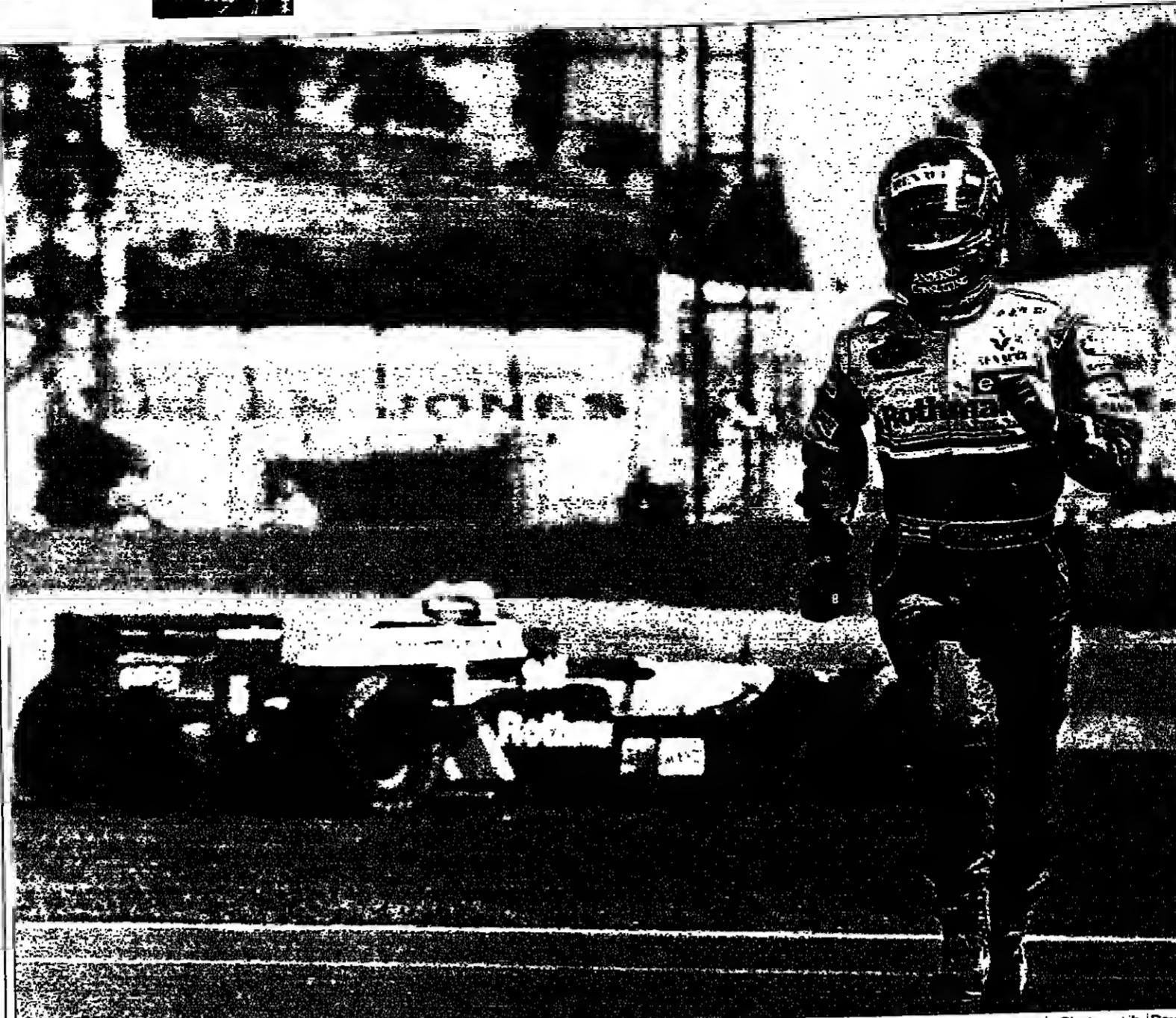
Last Saturday's solution



The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday will receive handwritten copies of the Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Mr R Sculfe, North Hamsberide; GA Bentley, Chelmsford, Essex; Alan Rovner, Swanscombe; Binda Large, Eynsford, Kent.

BACK IN THE SADDLE

Chris Boardman talks to Ian Stafford on his cycling comeback 26



Hot foot: Damon Hill sprints away after spinning off during an otherwise successful practice session in Melbourne yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Hill's timely show of strength

Motor racing

DAVID TREMAYNE
reports from Melbourne

Damon Hill took back the initiative from his upstart teammate, Jacques Villeneuve, yesterday as the two Williams-Renaults continued to dominate practice for the Australian Grand Prix, but neither driver placed too much importance on their performance.

There was a curious lack of tension on another day of unofficial testing, as Melbourne continued its laborious advance on today's official qualifying, which will decide grid positions. Hill said: "Tomorrow is what matters. What we did today is useful, but ultimately won't help me start from the front row."

Villeneuve echoed the sentiment, claiming not to have gone for an all-out effort. The drivers were reserving their energies for the first of the new-style one-

hour qualifying shoot-outs introduced under new regulations for 1996.

Jean Alesi complained of a lack of front-end grip but was the closest challenger in his Benetton-Renault, while the world champion, Michael Schumacher, improved after a troubled start on Thursday. He was fastest of all in the morning, with his team-mate, Eddie Irvine, third, but though they dropped to fourth and seventh respectively in the afternoon the German had made significant progress. He was, however, cautious.

"The situation is that we have had no real test running, as far as developing the car is concerned. We have been able to do a little bit of work to sort out the problems we have encountered, but there are still little things which you have to change and make reliable. We are pretty much on schedule, but we are not in a position now to think about good results and finishing

races. We haven't done a proper race simulation with the new car, so it would probably be a bit of a surprise if everything goes in the normal way."

The team's progress is nevertheless regarded as highly promising for future races, given

"If I'm having a hard time in a race then I'm going to look upset at the end. It wouldn't be a competitive person if I didn't get cheesed off. But I want to enjoy this championship".

DAMON HILL writes for *the Independent*, page 27

en Williams' markedly greater test mileage, and Schumacher added: "It's exactly what I expected when I came to Ferrari. I'm pleased about the principal situation. The base is all right. There are a lot of areas potentially we can build on. I predicted that the gap to the front row teams was going to be around a second – which it is now."

His Ferrari predecessor, Gerhard Berger, who ended the day sixth fastest in the second Benetton after splitting the Ferrari in the morning, was the centre of mild controversy following comments he was alleged to have made about two corners on the 5.27km circuit in Melbourne's Albert Park.

His apparent criticism had

provoked mischievous comments from the vice-president of marketing for the sport's governing body, FIA, Bernie Ecclestone, who said: "I'm surprised that he would say that, given he goes so slow."

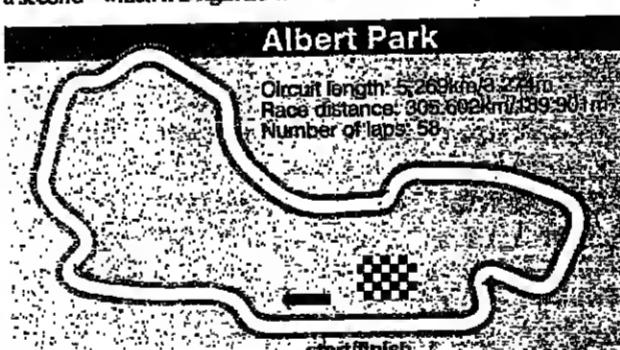
Berger later set the record straight: "I said that some points are a bit critical, and it was then written down as 'dangerous'. For a street circuit it's very quick and I think when you have a map or drawing in front of you, you try to make the best run-off areas and safety points."

"Then when you go round for the first time in a racing car, you find out that your line and speed are different from what you expected. You find different places that you didn't think were dangerous on the drawing. But apart from those two corners about which I have reservations, it's a great circuit."

The qualifying shoot-out promises to inject some much-needed drama, but one potential blight faded as threats of protest action receded last night. Though the "Save Albert Park" campaigners picketed the black grand prix ball in the centre of the city, the race organisers won a victory when the Supreme Court upheld their ejection on Thursday of four ticket-buying protesters who had hung anti-GP banners from their seats in the main grandstand.

Jean Chandier, leader of the minority group campaign to have the grand prix transferred elsewhere on environmental grounds, admitted that it is now unlikely that the threatened "international incident" will go ahead during tomorrow's race.

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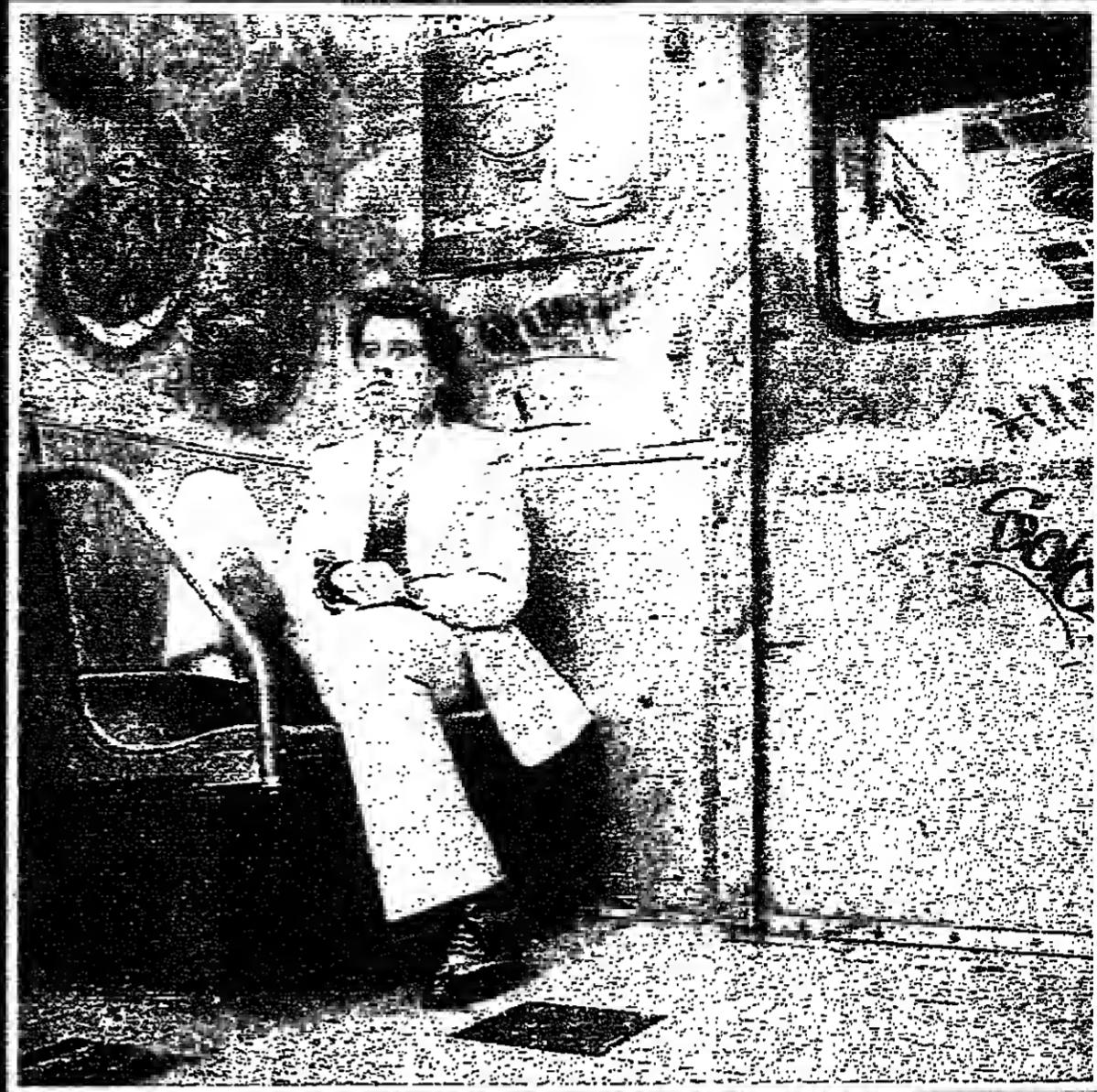
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The Independent Weekend



John Travolta, the man and his movies Interview, page 3



THIS WEEKEND WHY NOT...

REVISIT

Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen's most testing thing since the Aza thanks to the BBC's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. If you missed it or are in need of a quick fix of Colin Firth in those breeches, you can see all 314 minutes of it in glorious 35mm on the big screen at the National Film Theatre. At £10.50 it's the bargin of the week.

■ Saturday from 2pm, NFT, London SE1 (0171 928 2252)

DINE

Dad's Army-style

Fans will remember that Clive Dunn played the local butcher Corporal Jones, so it's wholly appropriate that he should be flying in specially to join the groovy and sweet-tempered ARP warden Bill Pertwee for tonight's celebrity-studded cabaret and four-course dinner in aid of Comic Heritage. Fun and food guaranteed.

■ £30 including dinner, from Comic Heritage (0181 348 1187)

SEE

Yeats

The life of painter Jack Yeats was a great deal more interesting than simply being brother of the more famous WB Yeats. A new exhibition spans everything from his early works to his bold, expressionist late canvases which cemented his reputation as one of the foremost Irish painters of the 20th century.

■ Manchester City Art Gallery, Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 2pm-5.30pm

TRAVEL

Through Time

This is your chance to have an out-of-body experience thanks to the Forbidden Science Weekend. The Lakhovsky box generates electrical energy similar to that produced in thunderstorms. Tony Bassett demonstrates its many uses, including, he says, time travel.

■ CCA, 350 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow (0141 332 0522). Day ticket £5, £2 concs

RENT

Dolores Claiborne

Who would have believed that Stephen King would have been the man behind this cracking film noir crossed with an old-fashioned women's picture? Jennifer Jason Leigh, Kathy Bates and Judy Parfitt deliver the goods in a film that makes you forgive its director, Randal Kleiser, for making *The Blue Lagoon* and *Grease*, and that's saying something.

■ On general release

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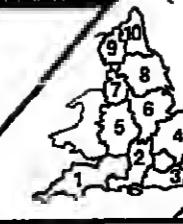


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picture story



Fans watch the England v South Africa match in Rawalpindi, in which England were beaten. Attendance at games has been irrepressible: 45,000 tickets for the Pakistan vs India quarter-final in Bangalore were sold in three hours — many camped on the streets overnight

Win or lose, England's batsmen can normally expect little more than astonishment or shrugged shoulders from their fans. Things couldn't be more different for the Pakistanis. The World Cup holders can rely on fanatical support from every quarter. Today they face India, their deadliest enemy. Next Sunday, the final will be hosted on home soil. The atmosphere is, not surprisingly, highly charged. Tom Pilston caught the mood in Lahore and Rawalpindi last week



Those millions who cannot get in to see the games live are glued to their radios for fast-action commentary

THE STATE OF PLAY



Above: throughout the sub-continent, impromptu games of cricket are organised on whatever open ground can be found. Here, teams form outside a mosque in the old quarter of Lahore
Left: Never underestimate the power of the crowd. The hurricane alert effect achieved when 30,000 fans drummed empty water bottles against their seats in Karachi put bowler Waqar Younis in his stride against the English team.
Right: spied in a public park — it looks like freeze-tag, but is it cricket?



JASPER COLE

He's back. And he's hungry

The early promise. The overnight success. The lean (and flabby) years. The comeback. The chocolate cake. The John Travolta story has it all. By Sheila Johnston

"I need something to eat," John Travolta is saying. An aide rushes over quickly to click shut the door of his suite on this small display of star displeasure. But not before he can be heard adding in a measured and eminently reasonable tone of voice, "Everything I've had here since yesterday morning has been unacceptable..." His cutting, convey the strong impression that Travolta prefers to meet the press in restaurants over a damn fine lunch. A colleague who interviewed him a couple of years ago for the *Independent on Sunday* boggled while he ordered a chocolate ice-cream chocolate truffle cake in raspberry sauce and a chocolate mousse with whipped cream, and proceeded to devour the lot. When he is holed up in a hotel doing conveyor belt publicity, there are always the consolations of room service. Usually. But now the door reopens to eject a trolley laden with plates whose gleaming silver cloches conceal doubtless inedible substances. It's 11am and he's starved.

Not that Travolta is probably being picky; we are in Germany, land of unacceptable nosh. And not that he's being in the teeniest bit unpleasant. At this year's Berlin Film Festival he might be at the centre of a media maelstrom, but he is conducting himself with unflattering courtesy and composure. At the next day's press conference, someone takes the floor with a carefully prepared *bon mot*: "You once made *Saturday Night Fever*, Herr Travolta. Are you in a FEVER of excitement now that your new film is being shown here this SATURDAY?" There is a chorus of catcalls and groans at the asinine question, but Herr Travolta drowns them out, magically transforms them into warm applause, as he replies with his dazzling smile, "Ich bin ein Berliner," and says with apparent sincerity that he is honoured and delighted to be present.

Two or three things without which no Travolta piece is quite complete. Humble origins: a former semi-pro football player, later the proprietor of the Travolta Tire Shop in suburban New Jersey. Mother in show business: an acting coach. John the youngest of six children, with two brothers and three sisters who nicknamed him Bone because he was so long and lean. That was before he could

walk. Aged six, he informed his mom that if she didn't make him a chocolate pudding, he would cut off his weenie (she made the pudding) and has never looked back since.

Plane-crazy since a tender age and now the owner of three jets, a Vampire, a Lear and a Gulfstream II. A committed disciple of Scientology for nearly 20 years, and for which (alarmingly) he today seems a brilliant advertisement. First love Diana Hyland, an actress 18 years his senior, who played his mother in a 1976 television film: a year later, she died in his arms (of cancer), leaving him devastated. "Outed" as gay, along with a number of other luminaries four or five years ago, though since his marriage to the actress Kelly Preston, with whom he has a small son, those rumours have fizzled away.

Classic helter-skelter Hollywood career, from overnight phenomenon (*Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease*) to baseline in a matter of movies. Conventional wisdom has it that he became bad and certainly in the mid-Eighties: there were some fruitful duds. Still, these things seem more obvious with hindsight:

Arthur, *Splash!* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* might have kept Travolta bankable, but forgive me if I fail to see that missed out on a string of masterpieces when he passed on them in favour of films like *Brian De Palma's Blow Out*. Travolta's *Arthur* is a lost opportunity I can comfortably live without. Then Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction*, Oscar nomination: he instantly acquired the affectionate nickname The Comeback Kid. And it seemed everyone was pleased to see him in town again.

In Berlin he is accompanying *Get Shorty*, based on Elmore Leonard's satirical novel about Chilly Palmer, a small-time loan shark (Travolta) who comes to Hollywood and launches himself successfully on a second career in the movie business. Asked earlier whether he had

had any brushes with the Mob in Hollywood, Danny DeVito, the film's producer/co-star, had flinched that he'd never experienced or even heard of "this kind of money-laundering thing". To the same question, Travolta promptly replies (even though, as a non-producer, he is far less likely to have come across dodgy dealings): "My brother [Joey] had done some independent films financed by... who

knows?" That's the only close-to-reality I know of that whole world. I'd say, "How much is it being done for?" "Oh, we're gonna do the whole movie for \$200,000." "And where are you getting the money?" "Someone in Las Vegas." "Oh" — he mimics slowly dawning awareness — "I see. I get it..."

"There does not seem to be much place for [him] in the broad and open steppes of the Travolta landscape. One remembers a diary he wrote for *Rolling Stone* magazine while playing a (*Rolling Stone*) reporter in one of his Eighties flops, *Perfect*. "I'm not sure if Jamie Lee Curtis, his co-star] wants to make love to me or not," he confided to millions of readers. "It would be nice, but I'm getting cross-signals at this point... I get the feeling she would want it to be genuine, but that she gets confused when the time is right. I'm more comfortable being seduced by a woman the first time, and she doesn't know that." That degree of candour is, to say the least, rare in a Hollywood megastar, and rather disarming.

He's often cast as a bad boy and has just played two gangsters on the trot ("Why? 'Offers I couldn't refuse,'") he shoots back instantly), although, he also points out, the two characters are very different beasts; they just have "a similar profession", as he quaintly puts it. "I don't think the man in *Get Shorty* would tolerate the man in *Pulp Fiction* for more than five minutes. Because he's a drug addict, he's unprofessional. Unpredictable. He might be appealing but he's a loose cannon. Chilly could smell that, just like he could smell everybody in Hollywood."

But these two hard nuts share a sweetness — an innocence, almost — and a vulnerability, qualities at the very core of the Travolta appeal: even when playing a bad guy, you have to warm to him. Chilly's Achilles' heel is that he's a helpless movie buff — one scene finds him in a half-empty cinema entranced by a revival of Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil*, mouthing the lines along with the characters. "He's tough, he's real, he's smart, but his love for the movies is like a 12-year-old's. That's what makes him interesting. I fought for the childlike quality in him; it wasn't originally there. I said, 'Please: if you don't see why he loves the movies

so much, you're going to miss a potential for this character that's enormous. All I need is three or four moments. So they wrote the cinema scene and a couple of others. Like, I bear a guy up and then I find out he's a stunt man and ask him what movie he's been in. You just need a few things like that to colour a character and give him an arc.'

Travolta talked with the real Chilly Palmer on whom Leonard based his character, but says he did not attempt to imitate the man. "He was quite different than I anticipated. I met him during the movie and I was glad I didn't before because I may have picked up some choices that wouldn't have been right for how I interpreted it. He's very straightforward." And now Travolta springs to his feet. His body goes ramrod stiff, his large, slightly greying head is tilted straight and slightly upward, his voice rises a half-octave into a high, nasal monotone whine. "Down in Miami, yeah, we were down there and this guy came up and I punched him..." Chilly had an unusual personality, nothing that would have been transferable to the screen.

The sudden transformation is funny, impressive and a little uncanny, but Travolta makes acting sound like pure simplicity. "I study the character in as many details as I can get. I visualise him until the thinkingness [sic] comes together. There's a moment when everything you say comes out exactly like he would say it. The way you dress, the way you smoke, the way you speak, the way you walk. When it's all automatic, at that moment you know: it's happened. Then, once you've got one character down and you're certain what he's about, it's very easy to start working on another. Characters have their own lives, you know. I could bring you three or four characters this minute."

Travolta will be needing that ability, for his dance card is full for quite a while to come. Next month we will see him in John Woo's *Broken Arrow*, a piece of enjoyable pyrotechnical bunkum that allows him to indulge his passion for flying as a maverick Air Force major who steals an 800mph plane with two nuclear warheads on board. It's scarcely an acting stretch, but he obviously has a ball playing a double-dyed (but still, inevitably, somehow likeable) villain.

"John [Woo] wanted him very stylish, he wanted him to smoke, then I had to mix that in with psycho... psycho... psychos? if you will." He stumbles over the word, ending on a rising, questioning inflection.

"I remembered some military types I had met when I was younger, who were warmongers, articulate and calm but *savvy*, and I incorporated a lot of that. I went to some bases and watched how they moved. It wasn't hard. I got to pontificate and order people around and smoke cigarettes a lot. My big fight stuff was at the beginning and end. Most of it was being nuts, know what I mean? I had the fun part."

There is more: over the next year or so we should see him in *White Man's Burden*, a satire based on the premise that blacks are the privileged class in society and whites the underdogs; *Phenomenon*, a fantasy in which he plays a small-town guy who becomes a genius after being struck by lightning; *Michael*, a comedy directed by Nora Ephron; and a film with Roman Polanski: *The Double*. Plus, further down the line, a project with Sharon Stone and a political thriller called *Dark Horse*. His combined salaries for this little lot are said to exceed \$40m.

As I leave, a trolley arrives groaning with fresh rations: time for a quick pit stop before the next session. He has his own Travolta Tire right now — a small one, and all but camouflaged by the expensive tailoring — but who's worried? He's professional enough to shed pounds when required, and looks vibrant enough not to care about piling them on again in the down-time between pictures (though even in the *Saturday Night Fever* days, he never ballooned to Brando-esque proportions). He does not drink and, though a furious smoker on screen — one of the few actors, in fact, to practise this near-obsolete art with real panache — did not light up once on the several occasions I saw him (he sometimes permits himself a cigar, which, he says, reminds him of his father). These minor weaknesses put us in mind of an adored little brother with a passion for chocolate pudding. They're permissible — more than that, endearing. In a word, acceptable.

'Get Shorty' opens next Friday; 'Broken Arrow' opens on 12 April

COVER PICTURES
(clockwise from top right)
The Travolta look down the ages:

The monosyllabic New York disco kid in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)

The man who knew how to dance and chew gum in *Grease* (1978)

The innocent hick learning the ways of the world (and how to ride a mechanical bucking bull) in *Houston in Urban Cowboy* (1980) — Ronald Grant Archive

The film that brought him back to life, *Pulp Fiction* (1994), in which he was a hitman with eyes of steel but a heart of gold, give or take a few carats

Today, in *Get Shorty* (1996) Travolta is a small-time loan shark trying to make it big in Hollywood — and succeeding...

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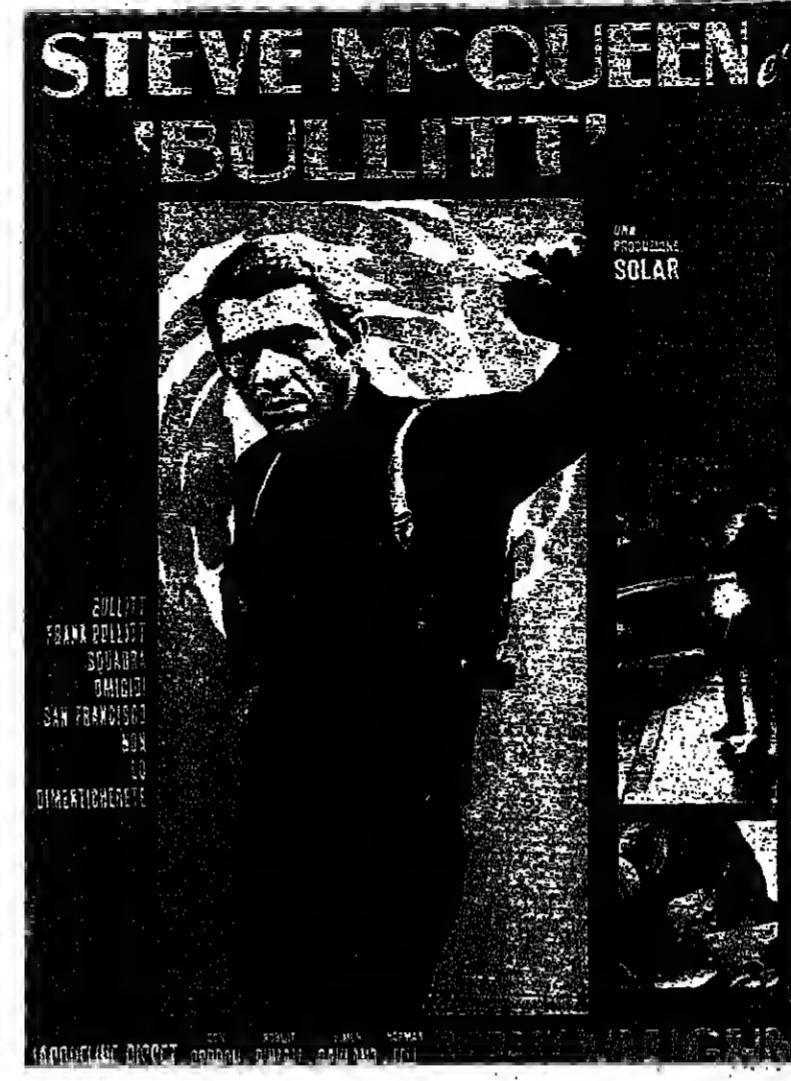
They don't make them like they used to

It may not be true of the movies, but it's certainly the case with movie posters. Which explains why collectors are moving in on them.

By Dominic Lutyens



REEL POSTER ARCHIVE COMPANY



REEL POSTER ARCHIVE COMPANY

Film posters used to be considered worthless ephemera once they'd served their purpose - to get bums on seats. They took up too much space in warehouses and were destroyed by the thousand. "Coming soon" posters - or "teasers" - for small, local cinemas were often one-offs. No one thought to lay them on acid-free paper to stop them from discolouring or to guard against pinholes and creases in anticipation of the day they could be flogged for exorbitant prices.

When Greg Edwards started selling film posters 20 years ago, there were very few collectors. "Today, more and more people are seeing film posters as works of art," says Edwards, whose shop-cum-gallery, the Cinegraffix Gallery, opened in London last month. "The art market is normally beyond people's reach, so they are looking for images they can afford."

According to Bruce Marchant of London's The Real Poster Gallery, poster-collecting started in America and only recently took off in England. "A lot of people here didn't know the posters existed," he explains. "But when my partner Tony Nourmand and I put on a couple of auctions at Christie's last year, we discovered

Film posters in the auction houses this week

Film poster collecting is a young hobby, especially in the UK, which is why a quarter of the 421 posters on offer at Christie's, South Kensington, Tues (10.30am), have never been seen on the open market. One of only three known posters of Abel Gance's 1927 French masterpiece *Napoleon*, is estimated at £10,000-£15,000. This is not a high price compared with prices for established mass-produced collectables such as postage stamps. In Britain, film poster collectors whinged at paying more than a couple of hundred pounds for one until last year, when South Ken launched dedicated sales and its consultant Tony Nourmand opened his London film poster gallery. A posse of collector-dealers from the US will be flying over in search of bargains at this second major annual sale. Some prices are unexpectedly low - Elvis posters, for

there were a lot of British buyers. We realised there was a growing market."

The market is partly driven by nostalgia. David Hutchison is a typical Cinegraffix customer with what he is happy to call an "addiction". "I loved film posters as a child and I've been hooked ever since."

"People want posters of well-known films, or of ones they associate with some memory, like their first date. But nostalgia doesn't always come into it," says Marchant. "Sometimes, we have a poster of an obscure Twenties film, but the

example, which are notoriously dull and were printed in large numbers. Even the only known copy of the poster for Elvis's film *King Creole* of 1958 is estimated at a modest £900-£1,200. Christie's is hoping the Americans will fight over it.

One poster designer who was given his head was Peter Strausfeld (d.1980). Remember his bold, contrasty posters for the Academy

Cinema that appeared in the London Underground in the Seventies and Eighties? Only 100 of each were printed from his original lino cuts. His widow Peggy tried to save one of each, and 19 are in the sale, with estimates between £200-£300 and £1,000-£1,500.

John Windsor

essary, as the gallery stocks 2,000 posters.

Reel Poster is more rarefied. A discreet entrance implies that only those in the know are likely to visit. Reverential quiet primes you for the biggest array of posters you're likely to see in Britain: an art deco design for *King Kong*, Curtis and Lemmon shouldering a winking, complicit

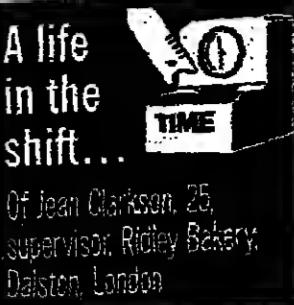
Elvis Presley in *Solar*...

Reel Poster's collection (prices from around £100) pretty much stops with the Seventies. But, says Marchant, the shop will stock Eighties and Nineties posters if the images are really strong. "Today's posters are photographic, so you've lost the elements collectors like - the design and artwork. They'll also never be as valuable as older posters, as they print thousands, so more of them will survive."

As they say in the movies, they just don't make them like they used to.

• Cinegraffix Gallery, 4 Copper Row, Tower Bridge Piazza, London SE1 2LH. Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm; Sun, noon-6pm.

• The Reel Poster Gallery, First Floor, 22 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1AF. Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6pm.



Of Jean Clarkson, 25, supervisor, Ridley Bakery, Dalston, London

The bakery is open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. I go to bed at around 2pm and get up at 10pm. I hardly see my flatmate, and I only see my boyfriend at the weekend. I was an art student at Middlesex and saw the job advertised in a newspaper. I keep meaning to get in contact with some artists, but I never get around to it. I've done a few portraits - staff bring in photos of their kids. I never charge any money.

I live in Peckham and cycle to work at 12.30am. We get a few dodgy customers; some don't want to, or can't pay; others are off their heads and buy loads of bags; and you get people from nightclubs. *The Guardian* said we had a not a fight between two guys. One woman sat on the counter with her stilettos in the cream cakes. I put it down to us being short-staffed.

Working here has made me tough. If you get grief from one customer, you might take it out on the next. We're always told to drop everything and serve, but sometimes I have to work overtime on other jobs - cleaning floors, making mayonnaise, tidying the deli. We get overtime pay, but you have to ask for it.

Our only perk is eight bagels and a loaf of bread-day. That's the worst thing - you put a lot of hard work in and get little back. Better wages would be a sign of appreciation, or at least somewhere to have a cup of tea and a cigarette. We take our breaks (three 10-minute breaks a night) on the stairs.

The high turn-over of staff means there is always someone new to talk to. It can be really busy. I'm amazed at how far people come just for a bagel. None of us who work here are Jewish - I'm not even that keen on bagels - but the owners are.

After I finish at 9am, I have a cup of tea and cycle to a gym. After a work-out and a shower - cutting up 15 bunches of spring onions can leave a bit of a pong - I cycle home, have some cereal and go to bed.

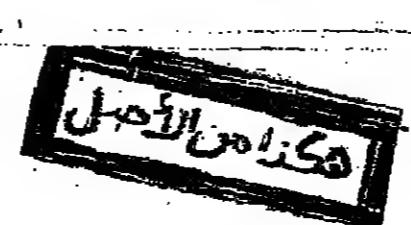
I'd like to do something else, but I don't know what. I don't resent those who can afford to paint. Good luck to them. I'd just like to get my act together.

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shopping

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The Housegos went to India. They were sick. Their son was kidnapped. But they stayed and set up shop there

By Charlotte Packer

David Housego's first trip to India might easily have been his last when, as a student, his overland hitch to Bengal via Pakistan turned into a tour of the sub-continent's nursing homes thanks to a ferocious bout of dysentery. As unromantic as it was painful, the three-month odyssey was the start of Housego's life-long love affair with the country.

The decision to move permanently to India was made for him in 1988 when the *Financial Times* sent him to Delhi as their Asia correspondent. The Housegos imagined the

transition would be simple enough. After stints in Paris and Iran, they thought they'd slip easily into expat life. "I'd been over a few times," says Jenny, a textile historian. "And we'd spent two winters in India with the children, and I felt at home."

However, in keeping with the tradition laid down by David years earlier, all the Housegos fell sick within weeks of their arrival. "We were incredibly ill with Dengue fever. It laid us absolutely flat. I was trying to find my feet, and not speaking the language, and having help which wasn't always as helpful as it might have been was extremely frustrating."

David recounts a catalogue of horror stories which would have had most people heading for the first plane home. "You're just giving the bad side," complains Jenny, although she does admit there were times when she wondered what they were doing there.

However, those doubts had long gone when, two years ago, their youngest son, Kim, was kidnapped while on a family holiday trekking in Kashmir. "We were very shaken by it all," says David. "But it didn't affect our feelings for India. Leaving never occurred to us." If anything, the experience seems to have confirmed their commitment to the country.

"It's home now. Where would we have gone?" says Jenny. "Living in India is rather like being on quicksand," she says. "You believe that one day the sand will become solid, but it never does; instead you find that you have learned to move with it."

Unlike the initial leap from London to Delhi, the switch from journalism to business came easily for David; he describes it as a fortuitous coming together of ideas and events. "We had been in India for about four years and various plans began to go through our minds. I felt that I might like to leave the *FT* and Jenny was interested in setting up a development project of some sort. We both liked the idea of working in India." A bazy plan to use India's untapped traditional textile skills on upmarket products became a reality when the law regarding foreign ownership of Indian-based textile companies changed in their favour.

"Shades of India" was the result. Jenny had always thought it a pity that India's reputation for textiles was so bad. "It's thought of as cheap and cheerful," she says. "When actually the country has produced some of the very best textiles ever."

According to David, the current boom in the manufacture of western clothes in India is threatening tradi-



Photograph: Cherian Thomas

tional crafts. As he points out, you don't need embroidery skills to sew a pair of jeans together.

Although hoping to raise the profile of Indian craft, and preserve time-honoured techniques, the Housegos were determined to make the products as contemporary as possible. The design team, led by Jenny, include Stuart Robertson, an English painter based in India, and a French design consultant, Marie-Claude Berard. David's opinion is called in at the final stages of development.

"Whether it's paintings, the textiles we collect or something we are producing ourselves, David is brilliant at spotting what works. I get bogged down in all the art history. David has the eye and I have the knowledge."

It's a good combination. Although barely three years old, Shades of India's bone textiles already grace the world's most exclusive department stores: Bergdorf Goodman and Takashimaya in New York; Porthault in Paris; and Liberty and Joseph Maison and Conran in London. Their appliquéd and exquisitely embroidered bed-linen, tablecloths, curtains and mosquito nets are a subtle marriage of traditional Indian textile methods with contemporary designs and colours.

The latest collection in organdie,

a fine translucent muslin, very little used in the West, has had buyers from homewares departments worldwide falling over themselves to place orders. "Everyone is trying to copy them," says Sarah Bryant, Liberty's textile buyer. "The key to the Housego's success is that their staff take real pride in their embroidery. They are using India for its good workmanship, not as a source of cheap labour." There's clearly a market for luxurious and beautifully made home textiles. Last summer Shades of India's organza mosquito nets, £275 each, walked out of Liberty the minute they arrived. "We couldn't keep up with the demand," says Sarah.

The Housegos started with one workshop in a Rajasthani village, and a finishing shop, laundry and offices in the heart of Delhi. Running an international business from India's capital is not easy. "Often in the summer, there's only water for an hour a day, and we need a constant supply for our washers," says David. Nightly water deliveries for seven months of the year and 13,000 gallon storage tanks on the roof keep production on track; regular power-cuts which cut off all communication with customers and their scattered workforce are kept at bay with a generator.

Compared to the office in Delhi, with all its back-up systems, the first village workshop was very basic: a rented house situated at the foot of a little range of hills with its own walled courtyard. Jenny describes it as "absolute heaven".

When Jenny opened the courtyard gates on the first morning, 20 women were waiting. "I'd estimated that we had work for about five ladies, but we gave them cloth and sat them down." The next day 40 women stood at the gates, and on the third there were 60. They short-listed 20 on merit and it has grown from there.

A training programme runs in tandem with the workshop, ensuring that when women marry and move away, other local girls are able to join. "Not that they need much training," says Jenny. "Their stitching is so good. It's in their blood. When the work involves new techniques, they learn fast and the quality always superb."

David suspects that the workshop allows many of the women to escape from mothers, in-laws and husbands. "It's been a tremendous boost to the income of the village, and it's given the women more independence within their households. Everyone is delighted." So much so that a delegation arrived from a neighbouring village asking for a similar workshop.

The Housegos now have several workshops scattered across India. In Gujarat, the women produce incredible chain-stitch designs; and in Assam, the remote north-eastern province, wool shawls are embroidered with scattered leaves in the area's trademark Kantha stitch. "Where possible, we use local methods from the areas the women come from," explains Jenny.

If we gave this work to women in another area, the needlework would become thick and lumpy and they probably wouldn't have the same instinct for the way the design flows."

So what happens next? The Housegos aren't sure. "India is so huge and there are so many different techniques," says Jenny. She will spend the next year tracking down skills and techniques unknown in the West. In the meantime, you can see the Housegos' latest range of organdie at Liberty in London.

Other stockists:
Conran Shop, London (0171-589 7401)
Joseph Maison, London (0171-245 9493)
Jenners, Edinburgh (0131-225 2442)

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1 Osprey bag. £225. Shiny leather patent Kelly bag in mock croc. Optional shoulder strap and gill fastening. A good, robust, elegant bag. A winner for being durable and stylish, also available in plain leather in the new acid brights. Available from Osprey, 11 Saint Christopher's Place, W1 and Liberty, Regent Street, London W1. Enquiries (0171-935 2824)



2 Ravel shoes and bag. £49.99. Kitten-heel sling back shoe in patent mock croc. This is a very influential shape for spring and summer, thanks to Prada on this season's catwalk. Co-ordinated with a matching clutch bag at £24.99. Available at branches nationwide. Enquiries (0171-631 0224)



3 Pied à Terre Basics. £69. Simple slippers that look great teamed with trousers cropped at the ankle or a simple dress. The toe is gently squared, a look that will replace the ballet pump, which was so popular around Christmas. Simple and classic. Also available in brown. Available from branches nationwide. Enquiries (0171-491 3857)



4 Russell & Bromley shoes. £99.50. Leather mock croc "Gucci"-style loafer. A very popular, sensible look, currently available from a range of high street stores. Can look smart with a trouser suit or casual with jeans. The Russell & Bromley shoe is a stylish shape that supports the foot well. Available from branches nationwide (0171-629 6903)



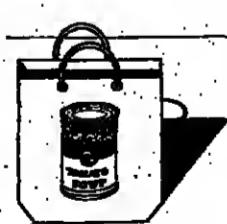
5 Sally Gissing belt. £65. Black patent leather mock croc belt. A very simple look, with a neat silver clasp will add style to any outfit. A good width for belt loops and very high quality. This item will still look good year after year. Available from Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London, SW1



6 Bersen shoes. £110. These shoes are great for the transition between winter and spring with the majority of the foot covered, but with strappy backs. Again, these shoes have a slightly square toe, which will be more popular by the time summer arrives. A sensible height block provides inches without straining the foot. Available from Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1



Stylist: Charlie Harrington
Photographer: Andrew Lamb



bazaar

Checkout

Where can you buy a zip? A simple enough request, which is surprisingly difficult to answer. Haberdashers really are a dying breed: we dug out some of the remaining few.

John Lewis, Oxford St, London W1 (0171 629 7711)

John Lewis became London's mecca for sewing paraphernalia when other stores decided to do away with their haberdashery departments.

MacCulloch & Wallis Ltd, 25 Dering St, London W1 (0171 629 0311)

This old-fashioned shop dispenses haberdashery items to trade as well as the general public. You can buy anything from cotton to corset-boning.

The Button Queen, 19 Marylebone Lane, London W1 (0171 935 1505) With over 300 varieties of pearl button alone, prices range from a few pence to hundreds of pounds.

Send fabric swatches in with details of quantity, size and style and they will be happy to put together three or four samples.

Buttons for Buttons, 32 Coppergate, York (01904 632042); also at Ilkley, Harrogate and Keighley.

This very useful small chain sells everything from zips, ribbons, lace, braids and trims to cotton. And, of course, buttons from 6p-£13.

Buttons 'n' Bows, Knight's Court, 70 Causeway Head, Penzance, Cornwall.

They stock fabric and metal clasps to make nurse's belts, through to suspenders, needles, pins, tape, patchwork pieces, cotton and buttons.

The Button Box 211 Shields Road, Byker, Newcastle (0191 2760785) This relatively new shop stocks all haberdashery requirements from lace to wool braids, fringes, ribbons and buttons.

Good thing

Waggers Dri-Bags, £11.95 - £27.95

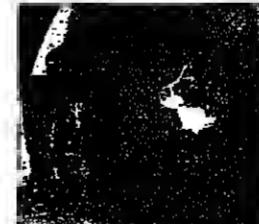
If you find that your car always suffers when you and your four-legged friend have been for a turn in the park, then zipping the soggy beast into a towelling bag may well hold great appeal for you. The bag not only dries the dog off but, thus restrained, it prevents it from roaming around on the back seat leaving muddy trails and hairs everywhere. And if that isn't enough, the nasty pong of wet dog is kept at bay. Of course, your dog may object to being stuffed into a towelling bag, preferring a muddy struggle instead, in which case you may come off worse than the back seats of your car ever did.

Comfey Pet & People Products, 2-4 Parsonage Street, Bradninch, Nr Exeter, Devon EX5 4NW (01392 881 285)

Mad thing

A potting-shed for townies, £198

Hortus Ornamenti's "Ultimate Collection" contains all that's needed to tend the window boxes and patio tubs which pass as gardens for most city dwellers. The kit comprises three hand-made tools (replicas of Victorian gardening gear), 45 "swing" and 30 "T-tag" copper plant-labels, a ball of jute string and a pair of gardening-scissors. Two slots at one end of the box provide space for packets of seeds, while bulbs can be stashed away in the main compartment alongside the tools. It's enough to make even the most reluctant gardener consider finding a few tubs for their hars window sills.



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The thing
about...
Tabasco

Where Robert Harris meets Jeanette Winterson. Or not, as the case may be

I have gone down with an infection and I don't see why I should suffer alone. It isn't anything serious, just one of those acquired sensitivities to one of the many allergens of modern life. I contracted this one in my local bookshop, after browsing through the new titles section and noticing two paperback blurbbs. One, for Tim Parks's novel *Mimi's Ghost*, read: "Tarantino meets Peter Mayle" and the other, for Libby Purves's novel *Casting Off*, read: "Joanna Trollope meets Tom Sharpe". Whether it was just the coincidence of the same location appearing only a few shelves apart, or the transparent coat-trailing of the names selected, I haven't been able to shake this irritating turn of phrase from my mind.

In both these cases the quotations came from critics, not publishers but, inasmuch as the crit-

ics liked the books and were presumably recommending them to their readers, the difference is academic. This is criticism as the hard-sell, which can take place at any time from the moment the agent first turns up with a fresh manuscript for an editorial conference. "I think you'll find it marvellous," she says. "It's about a female composer in Nazi Germany whose muse actually turns up in person. They become lovers and transmit German secrets to the Allies, encoding them in an achingly beautiful piano sonata which Hitler orders broadcast as an example of the superiority of Aryan culture. It's sort of Robert Harris meets Jeanette Winterson." And, with any luck, when the book is published an obliging reviewer will scramble for the same cultural grid-reference (though you might have to settle

for "John Le Carré meets Iris Murdoch").

Grid reference may be a little too specific, actually. This is not a precise science, more a rough guide to where in the cultural neighbourhood this new arrival is likely to locate itself, just as you might say to someone who asks where you live that it's about halfway between Bromley and Sydenham. As we orienteer through the woodland of modern commercial culture, it's helpful to have some familiar landmarks to navigate by. Some directions are more useful than others, naturally; Joanna Trollope and Tom Sharpe might at least be found in the same county, might conceivably meet at a cocktail party or a British Council tour of Pakistan - so you can vaguely see what the person who wrote the blurb might be getting at - a rather English combination



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

of middle-class angst and sexual comedy (I guess). But in the Park's example the way points are too widely spaced to be practical - as if you were to say to someone "turn left at Ambleside and stop before you reach Chicago". Here the promise is slightly different, of a simple money-machine alchemy; you can imagine the publisher's rep with his samples case open, trying to conjure the sound of jingling tills in the bookseller's mind. It doesn't matter that the conjunction is completely implausible; it's possible to spend a few idle

hours speculating about what such a combination would look like - presumably when you call out a local artisan to wipe brain fragments off the inside of your car he turns up three days late, completely pissed, and then swans off without finishing the quarter-lights. Or you pop out in the evening for a *pétit rouge* and get into a shooting match with the local hatcher after he takes offence at your thesis that *Hoss from Bonanza* was obviously having sex with his horse. Even in the mind of the most fevered salesman, though, this isn't an accurate description of the book in question (a rather good black comedy with an Italian setting). It might even be counter-productive, a phrase that hopes to sell the book as hot-hakes but merely suggests that it is a mixed selection from the past-the-sell-by-date bin.

It doesn't help either that, as well as being a familiar commercial pitch, the location is also a fairly common piece of comic architecture, in which the possibility of unlikely marriage is exploited for laughs. The writer of "Tarantino meets Peter Mayle" is clearly torn between providing a shorthand for the matter of the hook, and tweaking the line into something a bit funnier than "combines witty violence with an accurate representation of provincial life". And "meets" is on hand to solve his problem, just as it is for anyone a bit short of inspiration on day.

"Meets" is the most fashionable version of this habit of mind, one with a Hollywood briskness about it, but there are other more venerable forms - "a marriage of X and Y", say, or even "a cross between A and B". Clive Ander-

son offers a good example of the latter in comic mode - and of the lateral temptations of the construction. In the book accompanying his current BBC series he describes Che Guevara as "a cross between Tony Benn and Hugh Grant". This is sublimely off-the-wall, conjuring pictures of a shy, flop-haired Englishman in stained battle-fatigues. He is clutching a mug of tea and staring down from the Cordonilla at the enemy forces on the plain below. "Urm, I, um... look... oh fuck. I'm sorry but we can't blow the bridge unless we vote on composite 39 first. Umm... shory." Presumably, if there's a bit of Tony Benn in Che Guevara then the reverse is true, too, though we will have to find another half: Charles Hawtrey meets Che Guevara? Che Guevara meets Mr Pooter? Enough - I feel a sneeze coming on.

The Lucy Gannon formula

From 'Peak Practice' to 'Soldier, Soldier', she's written some of the most popular drama on television. How, as they like to say on the box, does she do that?

By James Rampton

Lucy Gannon has a lot to answer for. Thanks to her, we have had to endure the sight and sound of Robson and Jerome. She is the woman responsible for *Soldier, Soldier* - the army drama that launched the timeless romance to the top of the charts and onto every teenage girl's wall in the land.

Not content with that, Gannon also devised the hugely successful *Peak Practice* (doctors in beautiful surroundings) and *Bramwell* (doctors in beautiful costumes). To create one top-rated ITV drama is more than most writers could ever dream of managing; to create three just looks greedy. She has also developed a nice little sideline in single dramas such as *Tender Loving Care*, in which Dawn French played a murderous nurse. Gannon is now one of a very few writers whose name alone is sufficient to give the green light to any project to which it is attached. So how has she done it? Does she like the makers of Coca-Cola, possess a secret formula?

Usually bald-headed executives go all gooey at the very mention of the most sought-after writer of popular drama in British television, an unassuming, well-built woman with short-cropped black hair and a winning smile. If you passed her on the street, you might think that she was a care worker - as indeed she once was. All of them extol, first and foremost, her mastery of character. After all, you can have a drama without car chases or casualty units, without explicit sex or violence, but you never ever have a drama without characters.

"The few times I've had an idea rather than a character first, it's always gone dead on me," Gannon herself confirms, while sipping coffee in a quiet café off Marble Arch after a grueling day filming *Trap Trap* - a one-off BBC drama about domestic violence. "When I started *Wicked Old Nellie* [a 1989 play about a woman in an old people's home], all I got was a mental picture of an old woman sitting in a room looking at her foot and thinking 'Whose is that? It can't be mine.' Unless you get the characters first, you can't do it."

Jonathan Powell, head of drama at Carlton and the man responsible for scheduling *Soldier, Soldier*, *Peak Practice* and *Bramwell*, concurs. "She is a complete one-off. She dominates popular drama because she is brilliant at creating sympathetic characters that audiences like. In her scripts, there's an absolutely natural and instinctive directness. She's unfiltered, a very unpretentious person. She's not afraid of engaging the emotions of the characters or the audience." Think of the

beautifully modulated minutiae of *UST* (Unresolved Sexual Tension) between headstrong doctor Jack Kerruish (Kevin Whately) and Beth Glover (Amanda Burton) that resonated through *Peak Practice*.

The producer Ruth Caleb has worked with Gannon since her first play for television, an adaptation of *Keeping Tom Nice* in 1989. "Lucy is a writer with a good understanding of what makes people tick," Caleb reflects. "She has a very good instinct for what people want to watch, and you can't learn that. Her writing is character-driven. She finds the plots only after she's found the characters. There's a richness to her writing because it's bedded in character." This enables Gannon to deal with "issues" such as feminism (*Bramwell*) or child abuse (*Testimony of a Child*) or teenage pregnancy (*A Small Dance*) without bashing viewers over the head with them.

"Her strength lies in dealing with ordinary people in extraordinary situations," Caleb continues. "She is also able to deal with complexities simply. There are layers of complexity underneath her work that appears quite straightforward."

Like *Thunderbirds*, all the work goes on behind the scenes. Gannon, a widow with one teenage daughter, is often at her desk from seven in the morning till 11 at night, buffing and polishing her scripts. George Faber, the BBC's head of single drama, calls her "a master craftsman, or should that be mistress craftsman? She has a nose for a good story and constructs it with craft and skill."

Powell adds: "She's amazingly technically proficient. The first episode of *Bramwell* [in which the lead character, a crusading Victorian doctor played by Gemma Redgrave, and her patriarchal opponents, are cleverly introduced against the backdrop of a medical emergency] is a textbook example of how to set up a series. In years to come, when they're teaching television screenwriting at universities, they'll look at that first episode and see a sheer piece of construction."

Gannon underlines the importance of her background. Her father was in the Army and she had a peripatetic upbringing, leaving school at 16. "Army life gives you a breadth as a writer that you don't get if you've spent your entire life in Piddington-by-the-Sea," she reckons.

Trap Trap is ostensibly a departure from the comfortable, tried-and-trusted recipe. But the prolific Gannon has had popular successes with one-off "issue dramas" before: *Keeping Tom Nice*, about a handicapped boy whose father commits suicide,

"bloody woman". The sense of menace develops as he complains about having to keep a "tight hold" on her all the time before, some way into the film, he suddenly snaps into ugly, rib-breaking punches when she gets wine delivery wrong.

Unlike many writers who graduate straight from short trousers into major drama commissions, Gannon has a hinterland. After more than 20 years as a nurse, residential social worker and military police-woman - all of which came in very handy for her subsequent career - in 1987, at the age of 39, she entered the Richard Burton Award for playwrights in the hope of winning some money for a new car. Although she had only been to the theatre once before, she defeated 15,000 other entrants with her play, *Keeping Tom Nice*, to win £2,000 and a six-month spell as writer-in-residence at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Faber, who brought that play to television, sets great store by the fact that Gannon has a masters degree from the University of Life. "She has lived," he observes. "She has had a number of very demanding jobs that gave her tremendous life experience - all of which comes through in her writing. She has an astonishing insight into the human mind. It's always good to work with writers who have lived: they've got more stories to tell. Whatever their talents, younger writers don't have the same urgency to impart things."

Powell grabs the baton. "It's unusual to find someone who came to writing so late in life," he opines. "She's very, very different from other television people because she came in without an inherited agenda. She came in fully-formed as a person. It would be a bit like Alan Plater or Troy Kennedy Martin popping directly from the womb. She's not an Oxbridge type looking down on the audience. She understands them without condescending to them."

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picked up the John Whiting Award in 1990, and *A Small Dance*, in which a teenage mother abandons her baby, won the 1991 Prix Europa. Faber, for one, sees no conflict between hard-hitting and popular drama. "There is no distinction," he asserts. "Most popular drama is hard-hitting these days - look at *Band of Gold* or *Cracker*. *Trap Trap* is popular in that it takes ordinary people and puts them in a situation that has touched millions of people."

Gannon's work has not been immune to criticism. One columnist called her "the Betty Boothroyd of Derbyshire". "He said I was strident and left-wing," Gannon recalls, "and was convinced I had this huge political agenda. Wish I did." And after *Wicked Old Nellie*, the writer was condemned by a critic as "a bloody left-wing social worker".

But what irks her most is that snootier critics have looked down their noses at the popularity of her shows. "There's this tendency to decry ITV and to decry the popular," she harrumphs. "That's crap. If you value the viewer, then how can you be smug about *Peak Practice* or *Soldier, Soldier*? The great mistake is to think that if 15 million watch a programme and the reviewer doesn't like it, then it must be because the 15 million are all stupid."

Even after more hits than Mike Tyson, Gannon feels an outsider in the cocky world of television. "I still find it daunting," she admits. Nevertheless, three different drama executives are pleading with her for series ideas, and she already has a series about an open prison and a 17th-century love story in development at the BBC. The Gannon production-line shows no sign of slowing down.

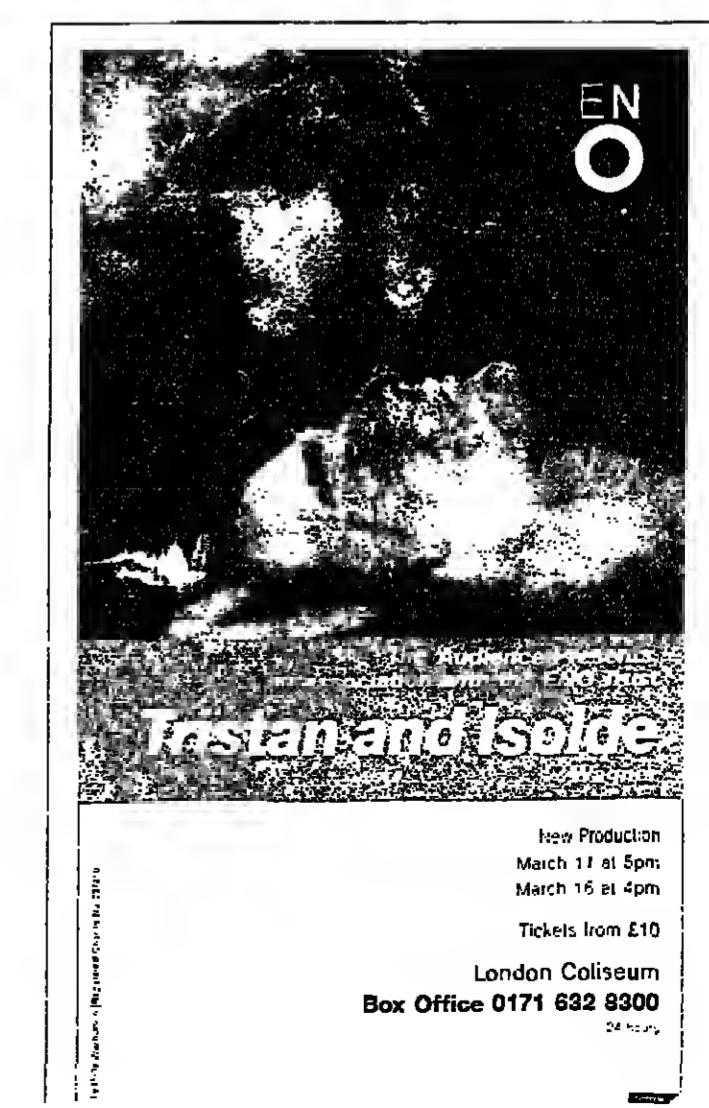
"As soon as you get one out, they ask, 'Got any more?'" she sighs. "It's like a huge writer-gobbling-up machine. Writing for television satisfies the village need for anecdotes - 'How's Mrs Bloggs?' - that sort of thing. I don't resent it. It pays me well and I love it. Seven years ago I was living in a council house with no central heating. Now I've bought a converted barn in Derbyshire and I'm trying to move to London. Writing is emotionally draining, but what a privilege at the age of 39 to find your voice. When *Soldier, Soldier* started, my husband George used to look out of the window and say, 'There are people out on the street. Don't they know *Soldier, Soldier*'s on?'

Trap Trap is on BBC1 at 9pm tonight. *Peak Practice* continues on ITV at 9pm on Tuesday. *Soldier, Soldier* and *Bramwell* return later in the year.



Writer, writer: Lucy Gannon's success is based on her ability to create believable characters in programmes such as (from top) her new show *Trap Trap*, *Soldier, Soldier* and *Peak Practice*

Main picture: John Lawrence



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arts reviews

TELEVISION

Father Ted / Fruity Moments (C4)

Re-appraisal for an unholy success and pip-pip-hooray for fruit. By Jasper Rees

In this job, you're paid to trust your own judgement. You think a new sitcom is dire, you say so. It then wins lots of awards, you look at the cuttings as a second series approaches and note that only the *Mail on Sunday* agrees with you.

Forgive me, Father Ted. For I have sinned. When I first saw your programme, my sense of humour malfunctioned. But like an old communist seeing the error of his ways, I now freely admit that the show is side-splittingly hilarious, that you are the most profound and many-sided comic creation since Falstaff, and that we have to go back to Luther to find a comparably detailed commentary on the venial frailties of the priesthood.

That sight gag involving two frocked men and a naked male posterior was a particular triumph – so killing, in fact, that you can grant yourself absolution for using it twice. Dino the one, or rather two, about the priest on four wheels flying over a cliff. As for the joke involving the village idiot taking charge of a lorryload of sewage, who'd have thought that in the final frame, yourself and Father Dougal would be splattered in the stuff? A prophet couldn't have foretold it.

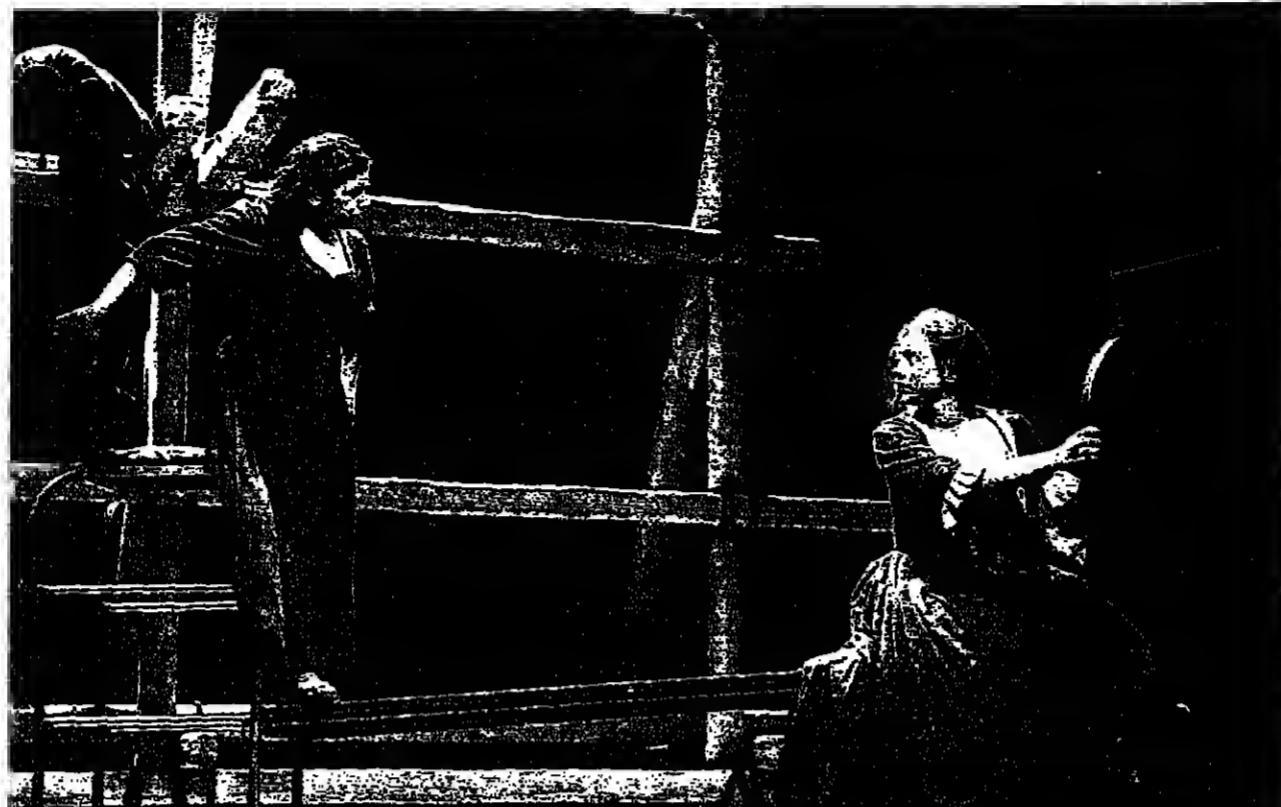
Because the pratfalls are executed with such cheerful vigour, it takes a while – in your critic's case, a whole series – to unearth the more knowing and world-weary gobblins of wit that fills the gaps in between. Far from appealing exclusively to the lowest comic needs (caravans falling over, old Father Jack too pissed to speak, etc), scriptwriters Arthur Mathews and Graham Lineham even run to literary criticism. Last night saw perhaps the first mention of Roddy Doyle in a sitcom. There can be no more reliable measure of a novelist's cultural outreach. The only other Booker winner it will have happened to is Salman Rushdie. "Ever heard the one about Kazuo Ishiguro?" doesn't really trip off the tongue.

Three unqualified cheers for *Fruity Stories*, a new series about the eternally virtuous. The narrator turning a watery text into wine was David Lloyd, once an England opening bat but these days the earthiest broadcaster around. The coupling sounds harry (but next? Clancy Ray Stubbs presents *Antiques Roadshow*) but makes perfect sense. Now apples, as well as wicketts, tumble to the same intoxicating sound: a fruit-punch accent from the rural pocket of east Lancashire that blends flat northern vowels and a ripe yokel burr.

Much of the programme's advice seemed a bit remote in March. The most useful suggested you get going on your greenhouse strawberries *prestissima*. The man from the Royal Horticultural Society recommended planting early-fruiting varieties. He named two, "both American, by the way, but very good". The flavoursome subtext, still deeply embedded but doubtless due to sprout and flower in coming episodes, is that anyone who grows a lot of fruit tends to deserve the suffix "cake", which is presumably why they bought in a cricket commentator to tell us all about it.

THEATRE Foe, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds

Silence is powerful, especially on the stage, as Theatre de Complicite's reworking of the Robinson Crusoe tale points up. By Paul Taylor



The voice of Robinson Crusoe: Kathryn Hunter (left) with Selma Alisahic, who plays her daughter

Photograph: Stuart Morris

As is shown by the mute and mutilated form of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, silence tends to be more eloquent on the stage than on the page. The palpable presence of stage silence – its capacity to transmit a sense of enigma, threat – is of great advantage to Theatre de Complicite in their new adaptation of JM Coetzee's novel *Foe*. The book is the kind of scrupulous, searching counter-fiction to *Robinson Crusoe* that you might expect from a liberal white South African. In his version of the myth, Friday is not the chatty noble savage of Defoe's, imagining, but a slave whose tongue has been severed (possibly by Crusoe) and central brooding question mark, here embodied in a powerful, dignified performance from Patrice Naïgambra.

With studied avoidance of sentimentality, Coetzee inserts a woman into the story of the island; indeed, he writes the novel in her voice. Once back in England with the traumatised Friday in tow, Kathryn Hunter's searingly expressive Susan Barton tries to sell that tale in order to secure the money that will liberate them both. In her communications by letter with her ghost writer, Foe, she becomes Coetzee's means of exploring such topics as the moral ownership and distortion of stories. Rob Pickavance's bewigged Foe is more interested in Susan's adventures before the island, searching for her daughter. Her willed silence on these matters is contrasted with the involuntary silence of the mutilated Friday.

Complicite have never been afraid of trying to make theatrical poetry out of improbably stageable prose, and with Bruno Schulz and John Berger they succeeded. Here, though – despite

an intelligent adaptation by Mark Wheately and a grimly committed production by Annie Castledine and Marcello Magni – the material is so preoccupied with questions of textuality and so top heavy with text that it pure frustrating restraint on the exuberant physical imagination for which the company is famous. The show is successful at conveying the tricky tensions between the trio on the island (a barren, gully-scored block of baked earth washed by aural waves that rush towards you on the soundtrack with the painful exhilaration of an express train), but it does not solve the problem of presenting in clear stage pictures the symbolic relationship of the participants to the London scenes.

At the start of that second half, manuscript pages flutter from the sky and Foe's desk and chair, each with gigantic legs, dominate the view. The book, which takes the form of a memoir and letters, keeps insisting on its writeness and, indeed, eventually establishes writing as the way Friday may find relief.

But it's hard to bring a letter writer and her correspondent into dynamic interaction and Foe's shifting dramatic status is not given a sharp enough focus. I'm ashamed to say that the bits I liked best were the ones of pure sensuous immediacy, for example, the moment, simple to achieve perhaps but magical, when Susan, demented by the noise of the wind, dips her head into a pool of water and all the sound suddenly switches off, creating in a work preoccupied by silence, silence of dizzying intensity.

To 30 March. Booking: 0113-244 2111

CLASSICAL Danish Composers' Biennale. The Nineties may offer thin pickings but the Sixties are in safe hands – and they're Welsh. By Stephen Johnson

Denmark's Third Composers' Biennale set off on its two-week journey last Saturday. There were no fanfares, no conspicuous attempts to market the product, but the theatre at Copenhagen's Den Anderen Opera ("The Other Opera") was packed, and the discussion during the intervals and after the concerts seemed – from my short investigative dips – lively enough.

Refreshingly, there was little evidence of the so-called "ghetto mentality": no protests (however muted) on behalf of "isms" or factions: no obvious little cliques darting hostile glances around the theatre bar. Either the Danish new-music scene is a lot less bitchy and

insecure than its London counterpart, or the Danes are just better at swallowing their resentments. I have my suspicions, but for the moment I'll forbear to judge.

The quality of music in last Saturday's two concerts varied, naturally, but there was little that seemed less than accomplished, and from time to time – and particularly during the evening programme – a real three-dimensional musical intelligence took centre-stage. Hans Abrahamsen's *Winternacht* was poetic in detail and overall conception. *Winternacht's* brand of gentle Northern Impressionism was echoed in Olav Berg's *Four Poems* and in parts of Rolf

Wallin's *Boyl* (the name may have to be changed for British consumption). But the Berg had only just enough substance for one poem, let alone four, while the Wallin depended too heavily on stock soft-modernist devices, and the expected boyish-up never really happened. The players can't be blamed: the Norwegian BTI 30 Ensemble sounded like a first-class new-music band. They made a more convincing job of Magne Lindberg's *Corrente* than any other group I've heard – so, those textures don't have to sound self-defeatingly dense after all.

The home-produced Athelas Ensemble's afternoon concert turned up

some unexceptionably pretty things, notably Svend Hyndfeldt Nielsen's aptly named *Flowerfall*, and one entertaining relic of Sixties absurdism, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Je ne me taîrai jamais, Jamais*.

But another Sixties survivor, Per Norgard's mini song-cycle *Prisme*, turned out to be a hard act to proceed. In its way, *Prisme* is just as much a child of the Sixties as *Je ne me taîrai*, and yet so much of it feels discovered, not borrowed or imitated. In one delicious moment a sharp, dry chord cut off to reveal a comically whining electric guitar – others have tried things like it, so why was this unmistakably Norgard?

By an elegant piece of planning, the previous evening's Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra concert included two works by veteran Danes: the 86-year-old Vagn Holmboe's new 13th Symphony and the oratorio *Moses*, written just over 30 years ago (the same year as Norgard's *Prisme*) by Herman Koppel. Holmboe's senior by one year, Koppel's *Moses* was a find, clearly indebted to Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, but with a hieratic grittiness of its own. Of all the pieces performed during the weekend, this and the Norgard are the ones I'd most like to hear again: the Welsh conductor Owain Arwel Hughes (whose BIS recording of Holmboe's Eighth and Ninth Symphonies with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra I chose as one of my five discs of 1995) directed it all impressively, and was warmly applauded by the audience for his efforts. With or without the daffodil buttonhole, he looks as though he's well on his way to becoming an honorary Dane.



KEY

EXCELLENT

GOOD

OK

POOR

DEADLY

overview

RESTORATION

Michael Hoffman turns Rose Tremain's Booker-shortlisted novel of a physician in the court of Charles II into a film starring Robert Downey Jr., Meg Ryan, wigs, plumes and beauty spots.

Sheila Johnston was slightly disappointed: "While no means a disaster, the story has a boggy, patched-together feel". "Rattles along at a good pace and doesn't overstay its welcome," smiled the *Guardian*. "Engaging," agreed *Time Out*. "Agreeably decorative and utterly flimsy," sniffed the *FT*. "You begin the film gaping in awe. Then the story grows dumb..." shrugged the *Times*.

At the Odeon West End (0171-930 7615) and across the country from 15 March.

critical view

Stunning Oscar-nominated visuals which look considerably more expensive than the \$15m budget.

The high-tech staging and Chris Parry's fighting dwarf everything else. Like watching a dazzling but portentous pop video on stage.

on view

At the Shaftesbury Theatre (0171-379 5399).

our view

TREVOR NUNN GOES NATIONAL

Former RSC artistic director Trevor Nunn (55) will succeed Richard Eyre as the director of the National Theatre despite the press championing of new boys Tony Award winners Stephen Daldry and Sam Mendes.

"Nunn but the best," quipped John Mortimer. "He does have its advantages. For one thing, he has experience," commented the *Guardian*. "I still wish the job had gone to the brilliant young Sam Mendes. The theatre needs a bit of excitement after all," wailed the *Telegraph*. "Mr Nunn is the best choice both to succeed Eyre and to succeed the National," averred the *Homes*.

Nunn now begins 18 months of preparation and planning before formally taking up the post in October 1997.

POP

Tarnation, Dingwall's, London

Charlotte O'Sullivan falls for melancholia from the valley of the shadow of death

At 13, *Tarnation*'s Paula Frazer was chucked out of school for smoking dope. As a result her father was fired from his job and the family had to leave town... It shows. *Tarnation*'s music is no happiness fest. Try imagining Patsy Cline yodeling through the valley of the shadow of death. And then imagine something twice as lonely.

Tarnation, who played to a small but intense crowd at Dingwall's on Thursday night, are an unlikely product of cowgirl punk and warped muzak. One bar will remind you of Lone Justice, the next of Chris Isaak. Whatever, it's not New Country and it's not tongue-in-cheek New Wave. It feels as old and earnest as the hills.

Tonight Paula Frazer, born and raised in the Deep South, wears a black velvet dress with a huge choker: in a good light she could pass for Elkie Brooks (at other times, it's undoubtedly Agnes Moorhead). She has a new hand and they're mighty impressive. Her two guitarists take root on either side, plucking their strings with the concentrations of village idiots. Behind the trio, the drummer essays soothing brush strokes.

The melancholy anthems "The Well" and "Game of Broken Hearts" emerge slower than on last year's glorious *Genie Creatures* album, increasing the dangerous desire to swoon. But with Frazer there's no ground to catch you, nowhere to fall except down, down, down. It goes so deep it makes your groin itch. Incredibly, Frazer seems oblivious to her power: she sways with the blank-eyed intensity of a Cassandra and then turtles between songs like a wacky grandmammy. "Hey, the lights are so bright, here, it's like a UFO. It's OK, I'm not tripping..."

Highlight of the evening is "Halfway to Madness", with Frazer wailing, "In the muddy brown water where I wrote your name..." It all makes as much sense as the words of someone thrashing in their sleep. "How simple things seemed, when I just wanted to hold you" – ab, now we know what she's talking about. Her pure voice soars and the guitars build, putting you in mind of trains leaving town, cabooses rattling furiously along the tracks. That's *Tarnation*'s music for you: providing a soundtrack for all the cheesy, hurtful images your dreams have ever thrown up.

When the mesmerised audience realise *Tarnation* have left the stage they start to whoop and holler. Frazer and the boys return. "Hello again, we'll do 'Big O Motel,'" she says and the crowd cheers. "You really want some torture, don't you?" cackles Frazer; "seven minutes of torture." We're talking lost love, here, and "cologne-drenched curtains" – pure high-school poetry – but in the mouth of this careworn woman it works. Yeah, we're wallowing in pain and lordy, it feels good.

Liter

creates

Packaging

the

All you need to know about the books you meant to read

by Gavin Griffiths

EUSTACE AND HILDA (1944-49)

by LP Hartley

Plot: Eustace and Hilda are brother and sister, mucking about at the seaside. Eustace finds a shrimp half-eaten by an anemone and, terminally oversensitive, finds himself in a quandary: the problem is solved by Hilda who decisively wrenches the shrimp from its predator; as a result, both creatures perish. This incident is the emblematic leitmotif of the novel. Eustace is taken up by a fairy godmother figure. Miss Fothergill, who leaves him pots of money when she dies. He decides to share this with his sister, so that both "shrimp" and "anemone" can survive. The only blot is Eustace's heart condition. He goes to Oxford. Slightly unhinged. Hilda opens a clinic and is betrayed by a posturing, neo-fascist friend of Eustace. has a breakdown and withers in a wheelchair. Eustace comes to the rescue: but in bringing the anemone back to life, the shrimp must die...

Theme: Eustace and Hilda are locked in a stale pavane of mutual destruction that they neither can nor wish to halt. Eustace evolves into a symbol of the refined aesthetic spirit, while Hilda is the tenacious do-gooder, a public-spirited pain in the neck.

Style: Ininsinuatingly graceful. Hartley shifts the narrative point of view and strands the reader in a state of wary apprehension.

Chief strengths: Apart from George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*, no other novel offers such a devastating illumination of sibling rivalry.

Chief weakness: The half-eaten shrimp and the carnivorous anemone, a deeply off-putting symbol of the sexual act.

What they thought of it then: Hartley's chum, Lord David Cecil, speaks of the trilogy's "poignancy", "pathos" and "exquisite refinement for feeling": he omits to stress the irony and humour.

What we think of it now: Apart from *The Go-Between*, most of Hartley's work is out of favour. He falls between the social acuity of James and the sexual poetry of Lawrence.

A cindery path out of childhood

L P Hartley's life moved from unexplained family trauma to cantankerous old age. Paul Binding looks for clues



Directly autobiographical: Dominic Guard (left) as the letter-carrying Leo in Losey's film version of *The Go-Between* (1970); L.P. Hartley's father (above) with his three children, Leslie, Enid (seated) and Norah. Enid was the Hilda of Hartley's *Eustace and Hilda*.

A member of LP Hartley's family, afraid he would enlist, wrote in 1915: "England is going to need just such men as Leslie presently". Born in 1895, he had as a schoolboy quite unusually combined sensitivity with an ability to succeed in conventional domains. Good at both work and games, he became head boy of his public school, Harrow, from which he won an exhibition to Balliol, Oxford. And when, after a year at university, he did enlist, he acquitted himself well in the army, though he saw no active service. He returned to Oxford having been told: "You have done your utmost for king and country."

But when England became aware of Hartley, it was as a writer of novels fixated on the transition from childhood to the adult world, seen as the passage from light into darkness. His work insisted, in the most dramatic terms, that he had suffered an early trauma of such dimensions that participation in normal life was utterly impossible afterwards.

Emotional relationships and sexual relations he viewed and presented as being of their nature, destructive. By his last years, Hartley's misanthropy was all-pervading. He regarded his country as having been corrupted by too much compassion. He used his literary gifts to articulate the most terrible ideas. The English working class he called the W.C., changing this, in case his point had been missed, to "the toilet". He wanted wrongdoers "literally brained, with F for forger, V for violent criminal etc" and many people hanged. Humans weren't the only object of his hatred

either. Disturbed by swans while boating on the River Avon, Hartley killed two with barbiturates wrapped in bread pellets. He died in 1972 with years of heavy drinking, "servant problems" and paranoia behind him.

What brought about this change? What darkened this clever, imaginative, well-off, indeed successful, writer's journey through life? What is the truth behind the various forms that the blighting traumas take in Hartley's best-known novels - *The Eustace and Hilda* trilogy, *The Go-Between* and *The Brickfield* - forms that support as well as conflict with each other?

Adrian Wright, as he tells us, admired Hartley's novels so greatly that their author became a hero to him. Fascinated by the sadness behind the sensibility, he set out first to explore Hartley's life and then to write it, persevering where others had turned back defeated by the dead man's friends and relations. But Wright won over Hartley's surviving sister Norah who asked: "What sort of book do you want to write?" A truthful book about Leslie, Wright said.

In this he has both succeeded and not succeeded. Wright's feeling for the writings is unflagging, as is his careful attention to them. A late-starter in full-length fiction, Hartley was very productive once under way, and in his lifetime received wide acclaim. Three publishers vied for his work because they thought him the most distinguished British novelist of the times.

He was a candidate for the Nobel Prize, and decidedly annoyed not to get it. Few post-war literary novels had had a happier career than *The Go-Between* (1953) which the Pinter-scripted, Losey-directed film greatly boosted; it has with no strain survived the 24 years since Hartley's death.

Wright is good on what features his novels share and what makes each one an individual creation. He is particularly shrewd about the lesser-known works, *The Boat* (1949) for instance, Hartley's ungainly but absorbing novel of the English countryside in the Second World War, or *My Fellow Devils* (1951), a study of conventional virtue coping with the evil embodied in a film star.

The life as opposed to the work presents formidable problems, the worse for Hartley's continual implications that the latter sprang from cataclysmic happenings in the former. During the filming of *The Go-Between*, for instance, a remark of his about the "real-life" Leo would suggest the novel was directly autobiographical. And Wright is convinced, surely correctly, that *The Brickfield* (1964), where the adolescent hero has a more active initiation into sex, is more autobiographical still. But when all has been thought and said, what evidence is there for any traumas?

Wright builds up a convincing picture

of a family life of suffocating gentility, decorum and tedium: his father was a Peterborough solicitor, and a rich man through wise investment in a local brick field, while his mother and elder sister were both cripplingly narrow and interfering women. Aren't Hartley's furid plots essentially dramatisations of wishes nurtured during those years which so squeezed all trace of rebellion and assertion out of him?

I am not even persuaded - for again so little evidence seems available - of Hartley's homosexuality. His obsession with women friends must have had an erotic element surely. We seem to be, in either respect, in very "cindery" territory here, to use one of his *alter ego* Leo's words.

It is on emotional matters that Wright is least satisfying. His determination somehow to account for so much unhappiness leads to this book's vitiating flaw. Wright believes that Hartley's friendship with his one-time fellow under-graduate, the younger Lord David Cecil, was so intense that he never recovered from Cecil's marriage, and that Cecil was therefore guilty of a betrayal that haunted his days.

In order to flesh this out he attempts to deny David Cecil - a friend of my own for 27 years - and his wife Rachel, herself devoted to Hartley, qualities which I feel his subject would have been the first to commend. There was constant communication between the two men throughout their lives. David Cecil taking the most thoughtful and generous interest in his friend's work.

Wright doesn't suppress this - he

gives us all the facts but hedges them about with prejudiced and misleading conjecture. He also fails to do justice to what the two men shared - a Neo-Platonic life-view and literary admirations in which David Cecil was often the leader, such as those for Emily Brontë and the Jacobean which so influenced Hartley's writings. In fact this biography's very title, deriving from the opening sentence of *The Go-Between*, can itself be traced to David Cecil, who used the phrase with reference to the past in his inaugural lecture as Goldsmith's Professor in 1949. David and Rachel Cecil were sympathetically and practically concerned with Hartley in his sad last years, as Wright, who himself shows exemplary kindness in his treatment of them, relates. This makes the flaw the more regrettable.

But maybe there is another explanation for Hartley's depressions. Judged by the standards they appear to invoke, for all their formal accomplishment, his novels are ultimately unsatisfactory. *The Go-Between* amply deserves its success with its many felicities of eye and ear, such as the schoolboys' slang and the marvellous set-piece of the cricket match and village feast, and its drama can jerk out a few tears. But it is midlebrow stuff; its psychology, morality and governing ideas cannot stand up to serious scrutiny.

For reasons we will probably never know, Hartley preferred retreat to confrontation - a chronic evasion which prevented any of the fictional metaphors for his agonised condition from ever reaching completion.

Foreign Country:

The Life of LP Hartley

by Adrian Wright

André Deutsch, £17.99

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A smoked-fish treasure hunt

Hugo Barnacle celebrates publication of a rambling Russian masterpiece

The Faculty of Useless Knowledge
by Yury Dombrovsky
trans Alan Myers
Harvill, £15.99

posedly let slip by failing to grill the treasure-hunters properly. The NKVD claim there must have been 25 kilos at least, but they're making it up, probably on the basis of a regional quota for archaeological finds set out by some Moscow institute. In short, Zybín is charged with conspiracy to steal something which may never have existed.

They seem to pick on Zybín who took no part in the transaction, because he was once questioned by the authorities when a student acquaintance committed suicide, and anyone who has ever been questioned is an anti-Soviet element by definition. (This was how Dombrovsky himself got into trouble.)

The NKVD captain, Neiman, Jewish and fearful for his job, wants to stage a big show trial, just like they have in Moscow, and Zybín can be made to fit the bill as an enemy agent. He was even arrested while making for the Chinese border.

This is a nice touch. We know

that Zybín was really wandering up-river to buy some black-market home-smoked marinka fish, because the treasure-hunters offered some of this rare

Out from Willie's shadow

Patricia Craig reads a worthy attempt at rehabilitation

The Yeats Sisters,
by Joan Hardwick,
Pandora, £8.99

Lily and Lolly sounds like a music-hall duo, but in fact the lives of WB Yeats's sisters, Susan and Elizabeth, weren't especially abundant in gaiety. They were the dogsbody of the Yeats family; indeed at one point, as their biographer is at pains to stress, it was only the income they supplied that kept things going.

The story of their father's improvidence is pretty well-known: how he abandoned the Bar for a career in portrait-painting, and shunted his family back and forth between Dublin and London, as each of these settings appeared more auspicious to him when he was out of it, while his wife (born Susan Pollexfen) withdrew increasingly into her own discontent. Of her four children, two - the boys - were destined to become famous, while the other two were merely bard-working and enterprising. Lily (as Susan was always called to distinguish her from her mother) first began earning money in 1886, as an embroiderer for May Morris, daughter of William. Lolly, the younger sister, wasn't far behind her, once she'd gained a Free School Teaching Certificate, and acquired the confidence to produce some painting textbooks. However, the two are remembered (if at all - the most frequent descriptive term applied to them is "unsung") for setting up the Cuadra Press and allied industries in Dublin in 1908, the Press which produced many first editions of their brother William's work.

The Yeats Sisters shows the overbearing, disputatious side of WB.

Joan Hardwick can't forgive him

for failing to value these industri-

ous siblings more highly, though he thought well enough of Lily. Between himself and Lolly, indeed, there was constant friction: they were too alike, self-willed and difficult to form any kind of alliance. The superficially more docile Lily was his ally, while he lived at home; Jack Yeats - the youngest of the four - hardly shared in the others' precarious upbringing at all. At a time when money was particularly tight, Jack was packed off to his grandparents in Sligo; and then he married a fellow art student in London at the earliest possible moment. The Yeats girls never married at all, and indeed the entire sexual dimension in their lives is a blank, at least as far as this biography is concerned.

The author hasn't come up with any more convincing suitors than an unfrocked Trinity don (Lolly), and the rich New York collector John Quinn (Lily) - though the latter was always on the lookout for mistresses as well as manuscripts and works of art, and didn't have to look too hard. Joan Hardwick speculates to spot Lily Yeats's unsuitability for the role. Nevertheless, he remained a patron of the entire family until his death in 1924.

For all their talent and practicality, Lily and Lolly were never exactly New Women or even Girls of the Period, both these tags implying up-to-date views and a measure of social assertiveness. Even their stand on any issue of the day can't be called enlightened, if you leave aside the question of women's employment - and that was a matter of necessity, not choice. Given the choice, we gather, they'd infinitely have preferred to be married. Their biographer can't avoid judging both of them, especially Lily, "conventional" church-going, anti-drink and shocked to the core by May Morris's carry-on with GB Shaw.

Although they settled permanently in Dublin in 1902, a time of considerable cultural and revolutionary activity, the sisters never took a firm, or a prescient, line on Irish affairs, and were at one in considering Constance Markievicz insane to wear men's clothes and involve herself in politics. And as for Maud Gonne - though they'd taken against this muse of their brother's from the very first moment when

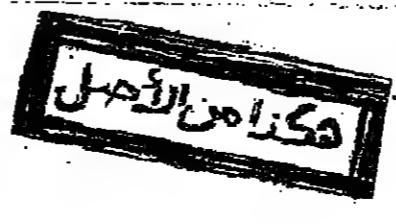
she came to call on WB at Blenheim Road in London in 1888, and looked down her nose at them, wearing a "sort of royal smile", intensely irritating. They fared no better with Lady Gregory, who took no notice of them whatever.

Joan Hardwick's aim is twofold: to bring the female Yeases from under the shadow of their brothers and father, and to stick up for Lolly, the more spirited, recalcitrant and denigrated of the two. Lily, the author tells us, must take some blame for the unadmirable view of her sister which has persisted through various writings about the Yeats family; living longer (until 1949) enabled her to cast herself, without fear of contradiction, in the better light.

Hardwick has made a good job of reinstating Lolly, whose prickliness and impatience strike a contemporary note; but she hasn't shown any special insight into her subjects. However, it does bring home to us the extent of the sisters' achievement in the face of such obstacles as a shabby education, uncertain social standing, superior brother, gadabout father, and no outstanding personal attractions. *The Yeats Sisters* is a workmanlike account of two workaday women.

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Kotyayev's *Большой Гонщик* (1929), directed by Lev Kuleshov, shows the titular "Happy Canary", a chanteuse at the fashionable resort (top left, cast, crew, expressiveness) and the undercover Reds (hammer, waistcoat, frenzied sincerity). One of a trove of weirdly

unintelligible silent movies from Eisenstein to the tragically undervalued *Victim of Stock Speculation* (1923)

Feel-good malice and futurist mirrors

Delia Ephron's tale of sibling rivalry is more than a bi-coastal Three Sisters, says Christopher Hawtree

I think I can claim that this was the first English novel in which dialogue on the telephone plays a large part," said Evelyn Waugh, 35 years after *Vile Bodies*. The device's function in 20th-century literature has yet to receive full study, as does another question: how does Armistead Maupin find time for his own work between supplying bensisons for the dust jackets of everybody else's books? Such is his enthusiasm for this first, telephone-driven novel by Delia Ephron, sister of Norah; that he has come up with separate words of praise for the front and back-flaps.

His advice to curl up with it "but unplug the phone first" is not misplaced. This tale of three sisters – Eve, Georgia and Madeleine Mozzell – might not give Chekhov a run for his money, but certainly shows that getting to a city (in this case, two cities) does not make relationships any less vexing. *Hanging Up* not only switches

Hanging Up

by Delia Ephron

Fourth Estate, £9.99

between the West Coast and New York but also, and often for the briefest of moments, cuts to and fro in time. (Doubtless the movie to be made by Norah will straighten this out and dull the effect.) One never feels lost in this narrative of sibling rivalry which began with the girls' upbringing in a household whose patriarch was a manic-depressive radio scriptwriter and such an alcoholic that his wife upped and left them all to it.

She is now somewhere in the backwoods as events come to a climax with the father, Lou's, increasing decay, incarceration and imminent death. Eve, outwardly the most

equable of the sisters, narrates all this amid the onset of turmoil from which she does not prove immune. Not only has her son smashed the motor-car into an Iranian's, but the victim looks as if he thinks it unethical to settle the matter without a premium-hiking claim on the insurance company – a situation compounded by the fellow's malapropisms and by enlisting his own mother's help.

Such moments – all these disembodied, omnipresent voices – have Eve looking in the mirror and, at 44, finding that "these sideways, unexpected encounters are the most jarring, these candid glimpses when I have not taken time to prepare my face to be seen and my brain to see it... I look the way I always have, but the face of the future is threatening to take over. I have two faces in one, a non-returnable bargain."

In New York, meanwhile, Georgia is preoccupied with her glossy magazine's

anniversary issue (she has the bold stroke of putting her own face on the cover – now there's a tip for the newly-transplanted Glenda Bailey if she wants to make a woe of *Mari-Claire* in Manhattan). Georgia's father is dying, but she has first to consider the stop-press matter of eggplant recipes – are they *poosie*? – before she can fly back. As for Madeleine, she is pregnant, a fork in the road for any soap actress.

As with Carrie Fisher's *Postcards from the Edge*, it is tempting to wonder how much all this has in common with the Ephron family history – no blushing violets, they. One is on safer ground in saying that *Hanging Up* does not go in with a scalpel but has that American quality of feel-good malice – the light, sassy wit, ear for talk and bemused observation that Henry Ephron brought to the plays and movie scripts he wrote with his wife, Phoebe. High time that somebody here issued his account of those years. *We Thought We Could Do Anything*.

Paperbacks



Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

Saint Rachel by Michael Bracewell (Vintage, £5.99). Feeling as run-down as the Mayfair club into which he has moved, John treats himself to a lavender-scented bath and once again runs through the closing scenes of his failing marriage.

Bracewell's musings on post-marital depression and his accompanying snapshots of comfortable London living (Soho restaurants, ivory-coloured duvets,

Prozac dependency and unlikely sex) are nicely done, but in the end more suited to the inches of a personal column than the pages of a novel. A book with a fragile storyline, its highly dramatic conclusion might leave you laughing.

Bold in her Breeches edited by Jo Stanley (Pandora, £7.99). From Pirate Queens to swash-buckling lasses, many a girlish heart has thrilled to the song of the Jolly Roger. There was Grace O'Malley and her fearsome Irish fleet, and those lively old salts Mary Read and Ann Bonny who so delighted 18th-century chroniclers with their tales of amorous adventures and cross-dressing. A collection of essays which reclaims these sea-faring women from the stuff of myth, and remembers those who skinned, cooked and slept their way across the high seas. Strong on dramatic personae, less watertight on historical analysis.

Perfect Love by Elizabeth Buchan (Pan Books, £5.99). If you like Joanna Trollope or Mary

Wesley, Elizabeth Buchan is for you. Set in a small village outside Winchester, *Prue Valour* divides her time between the local bookshop and daily runs to the station. It's a world where dogs and busbands share similar names (Max, Mungo, Cosmo) and similar natures. So it comes as some surprise when virtuous Prue finds herself falling for her stepdaughter's man. A light-hearted portrait of a home counties marriage – if it's that kind of thing that gets your Horlicks bubbling.

School for Women by Jane Miller (Virago, £8.99). For over a century, education has been in the hands of women. Today 60 per cent of all teachers in Britain are women, but it's a fact barely acknowledged in any public discussion of the subject. In an absorbing series of essays, Jane Miller traces the "long and choppy" history of women in teaching both here and in the States (*Little House on the Prairie*, *Anne of Green Gables* etc), and looks at current debates in education: particularly at why girls' increasing success in the classroom is viewed with such alarm.

The Country Ahead of Us, the Country Behind by David Guterson (Bloomsbury, £5.99). Pin-sharp stories from a writer who has been compared with Raymond Carver. Mostly set in northwestern America, they share a common theme of loss of innocence. Poignant, oddly potent, they often jump in time: a man caught in a fragmenting relationship recalls his disturbing sexual awakening as a teenager; a boy who prizes baseball above his girlfriend emerges as a man obsessed by the "widening loneliness" of maturity.

Dina's Book by Herbjorg Wassmo (Black Swan, £6.99). It must be the call of ancestral voices, but the British seem irresistibly drawn to satires set in lands snowier and more ice-bound than their own. Even better than Peter Hoeg in this respect, Herbjorg Wassmo's novel (a bestseller in her native Norway) features tinkling sleighbells, raging fjords and candle-lit castles. In a

story of gothic proportions, a young girl of noble birth scalds her mother to death with a kettle of red-hot lime, and goes on to develop a passion for savagery in all its forms. If it wasn't Norwegian, it might be considered a load of *schittoschuppen*.

Pictures from the Water Trade by David John Morley (Abacus, £7.99). From sleazy bars and strip joints ("the water trade"), to the austere propriety of the domestic milieu, Morley probes Japanese society as no Western writer before. But why adopt an alter-ego named Boon for the task? The answer is sex. An affair with a bar girl is described in salacious detail. For all his brilliant insights and in-depth knowledge of this alien culture, Morley has a berg-sized chunk of ice at the heart of his soul.

If This Is a Man/The Truce by Primo Levi (Vintage, £7.99). Two tremendous autobiographical works based on Levi's 11-month incarceration in Auschwitz – only three survived of the 650 who

arrived on his train – and his slow, circuitous return to Italy. Despite the inconceivable horrors described here, this is not a difficult book to read. Levi's superb, elegant prose is itself a beacon of humanity. But back home in Turin, the camp's "feared and expected" dawn command continued to dominate his dreams: "get up, Wsiawac!"

Efforts at Truth by Nicholas Mosley (Minerva, £7.99). More "notes towards an autobiography" than a polished account, combining musings, theology and lit crit of the N Mosley oeuvre.

Instead of the usual nursery memories, this book kicks off with an in-depth analysis of his first novel. Though a bit self-indulgent and po-faced, his absorption with ideas produces a stimulating read. Things are enlivened by a brush with Hollywood, several affairs and vicious family feuding, with his father, Oswald, spouting racism for years after the war.

Software for the Self by Anthony Smith (Faber, £7.99). Buttressed by a torrent of showy references, Smith offers a sketchy examination of how culture has been redefined over the past couple of centuries. He peaks in a frenzy of excitement about the new electronic toys: "we are entering a realm of high definition, interactive and mutually convergent technologies of communication." It never seems to occur to him that virtual reality really could be a dud or the superhighway might remain the preserve of anoraks.

Ground control to Major Tomski

A marooned astronaut muses on Russia. Paul Pickering is entranced

Adrift in the Oceans of Mercy

by Martin Booth

Simon & Schuster, £15.99

A unnamed Cosmonaut circles the earth every 89 minutes in his space station, Mir IV. The rest of the crew left on day 36 of his mission but, because of a rocket malfunction and the famous Russian inertia, he is left alone marooned in his craft on day 171, all hope of rescue abandoned.

Ground control, post-perso-

nally, have not only written off Major Tomski, they are embarrassed about him. He is not too enamoured of them. Mir IV

has a military purpose and will explode if tampered with, which makes calling CJ from *Baywatch* out of the question. So as he skims the atmosphere with a stowaway spider, sampling a radio station here, zooming in on a missile site there, the paradigm of our 10-minute-attention-span world, he reflects on his life and on Russia in this entrancing novel. Booth's ninth,

which I found hard to put down. Anyone who has ever been a guest on Aeroflot's flying Gulag will delight in the way Booth ironically underscores the Russian ability to create technological miracles and then keep pigs in them. Khrushchev sneered when his own politbureau chiefs felt the edge of the fins of the first Sputnik rockets for sharpness, as they might a hoe. But in Booth's Mir IV there are no strings of peppers and mush rooms drying across computer consoles or squirrel skins nailed to the hatch. The description of spacelife is painstakingly researched and very realistic.

"The meat invariably had a salty flavour and a slightly rubbery, striated texture. Petrenko, the commander of my first mission, said it was like eating shredded condoms."

But Booth establishes his character in the reader's imagination so well the odd lapsi is permitted. The cosmonaut realises that while not a god at least he is free, which is what the phrase "ocean of mercy" signifies. A girlfriend, Shura, likes to walk naked through the standing wheat; she says that after love-making the wheat is an ocean of mercy. "I never understood exactly what she meant until now as I realise, spinning through space with my future laid out like a Persian carpet before me..."

The spaceman contemplates his end with dignity. He can measure his lifespan in the amount of food left. The waste-disposal system is packing up and the cosmonaut makes a last choice: it would be churlish to reveal. Martin Booth has moulded an excellent idea into a wonderful novel which celebrates the Russian soul and serves as an uncomfortable metaphor for the solitary writer. Definitely a novel to divert you if lost in space.

Audiobooks

Oscar Wilde
read by Martin Jarvis



In Your Garden: Spring & Summer
read by Janet McTeer

The melodrama and rhetoric of a trial is perfect for audio. Giles Brandreth's selection from the transcripts of the three 1893 trials that spelled the doom of Oscar Wilde (CSA, 150 mins, £7.99) puts over both Wilde's irrespressible wit and his enemies' vindictiveness. Multi-track recordings allow Martin Jarvis, one minute all effervescent aesthete, next all ponderous QC, to interrupt and answer back in a way that is pure theatre rather than mere reading.

Christina Hardym

Converts to gardening in a Walkman will find Vida Sackville-West's *In Your Garden: Spring & Summer* (Cover-to-Cover, 130 min, £7.99) sheer delight. Originally collected *Observer* columns published in 1951, now soothingly read by Janet McTeer, it is packed full of useful hints, timely reminders and infectious enthusiasm. The sequel, *Autumn & Winter*, is also available.

A first novel of precocious maturity which mingle past, and present, the horrors and delights of Haiti. In a quiet and dignified prose that would be impressive in a writer twice her age.

Edwidge Danticat
Come from a place where breath, eyes and memory are one. A place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head.

INDEPENDENT

ABACUS

There's a fight over the River Wye: conservationists want to preserve the peace; developers see its business potential

By Michael Prestage



Conservation versus pleasure boats on the Wye
Photo: Rob Stratton

For centuries the River Wye has attracted thousands of visitors, drawn by its great scenic and natural beauty. In 1798 William Wordsworth penned *Lyrical Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* during a visit to the river. "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, O Sylvan Wye! though wanderer through the woods," he wrote.

Unfortunately, in recent years more and more people have turned to the Wye – a river of major importance for conservation because it has a largely natural regime and has remained free from pollution.

Their interest has often extended beyond sitting on its banks, notepad in hand, composing poetry. While the river still attracts walkers, it also numbers canoeists, rafters, and pleasure-boat owners among its regulars. And its status as a salmon river brings game fishermen willing to spend a pretty pound in pursuit of their sport.

Until now, the disparate devotees of the river have co-existed in an uneasy truce. But the seemingly dry topic of navigation rights has shattered that peace.

There are two bids for the navigation rights, which convey a stake in the management of the river – power is shared with the National Rivers Authority (NRA), the national guardian of the aqueous environment, which has limited powers to make by-laws for the river.

One bid is from the NRA itself, which

sees such a move as a natural extension of its present powers. The other contender is a group of businessmen seeking to revive an old company, incorporated by Parliament in 1809, The Company of Proprietors of the Rivers Wye and Lugg Navigation and Horse Towing Path.

Now lawyers are being hired and history books scoured as both sides pursue their case. The NRA is accused by its critics of being in cahoots with the landed gentry who have the fishing rights and want to preserve the status quo. Those wishing to revive the ancient company and develop the river commercially are seen as get-rich-quick interlopers.

Sporting organisations are assessing which lobby will best favour their vested interests. For instance, the river hosts the annual 100-mile River Wye Charity Raft Race, the longest event of its kind in the world, and those who organise it want to be allowed to continue.

Below Hay-on-Wye, down to the Severn Estuary at Chepstow, there are 100 miles of free navigation on the river. But moves are afoot to impose regulations.

The NRA points to conflicts of interest that have arisen between various user groups such as canoeists, rafters and anglers. It argues that without controls "there is a risk that recreational use of the river will conflict with nature conservation and damage the environment or disturb wildlife."

Dr John Stoner, NRA regional gen-

eral manager, said: "The River Wye and its catchment is a river system of great importance. We must safeguard its unique character. We believe this is the right time to try to secure the balanced use of the river for the benefit of this and future generations."

It is a view echoed by conservation groups, including English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), who both back the NRA's attempt to take on the navigation rights.

Ray Woods, an area officer for the CCW, said the navigation rights were a complex issue, but there would certainly be concern if the towpath company's proposals to introduce weirs and locks were to be implemented.

The river has Site of Special Scientific Interest status, and there are proposals to re-negotiate the Wye in the new Wildlife and Countryside Act and pave the way for it to be the first river in Britain to be made a Special Area of Conservation.

The River Wye is special for a whole host of reasons. It supports rare species, including two types of shad, the Allis and the Twaite, and because no impenetrable barriers have been introduced, and there has been no pollution, it is one of the most natural rivers in Britain," he said.

Conservationists are happy that the River Wye is not inundated with visitors. As regards boating and tourism, it has not been extensively marketed, but that could change. Critics of those with a more commercial approach to the

river fear "another Richmond on Thames".

And those involved with the towpath company believe that the river could be better exploited commercially. Installing locks and weirs and dredging would open the river up to pleasure boats as far as Hay-on-Wye and bring valuable tourism revenue.

The NRA has taken legal action to have the towpath company bid overturned, while at the same time embarking on a public consultation exercise before proceeding with its own legal claim to the rights. The first round in the fight went to the NRA after High Court proceedings were taken against Mr Victor Stockinger, a New Zealand lawyer who is handling the towpath company's claim. The Court did not support Mr Stockinger's claim to act as of "governor" of the old company.

However, the search is on by those backing the towpath company to find the old shares, and they are confident the first legal setback will be overturned. Both parties were due back in court last month (Feb 15) to hear an appeal by Mr Stockinger against the ruling.

Des Davies, landlord of a Hereford pub and a prime mover behind the campaign, said: "We decided to revive the company because the river is dying. Salmon numbers are falling because the river is silting up. As a child I can remember catching elvers when the river was black with them. They have disappeared now."

The council sees economic development as a spin-off for the area. "We would like to see people navigate the river in pleasure boats, stop overnight and spend money here. We think this could be done without environmental damage," Mr Willis said.

The legal fight is certain to continue. In the meantime, those who use the river for pleasure and profit will have to try and get along until a statutory control is established.

He said the river was navigable to vessels up to 1856. A cider mill at Bredwardine was built with stone brought up river by barge. Research has shown he claims, that locks existed on the river.

"We don't want to damage the environment, but we do want to breath new life back into the river."

If the company can be revived it hopes to build 22 locks and weirs. Its backers believe that the tourism the company will attract will create 1,000 jobs along the river.

Those supporting the bid include Hereford City Council, which believes that the city and its riverside environment would benefit, and investors are standing by to finance it.

Charles Willis, the council's chief executive, said: "We are opposed to the idea of the NRA becoming the navigable authority because it wants to suppress navigation. The Wye is a dreadfully wasted resource. Once Hereford built ocean-going ships. Now it is impossible to reach the ocean because there is so little water."

The council sees economic development as a spin-off for the area. "We would like to see people navigate the river in pleasure boats, stop overnight and spend money here. We think this could be done without environmental damage," Mr Willis said.

The legal fight is certain to continue. In the meantime, those who use the river for pleasure and profit will have to try and get along until a statutory control is established.

COUNTRY PURSUITS



Will O'Leary, stonemason based at Knucklas, Powys

"I get out of bed at 8am and take a cup of coffee into my study. I design most of my commissions and like to spend a whole week doing the drawings before going to the workshop. I have three headstones on the go at the moment. They all have to be drawn out, executed and fixed at the site.

"All the carving and lettering is done by hand. For some masonry, I use a compressor and pneumatic chisels, but I prefer to work with my bare hands.

Horrible modern monumental masons use machines: computer-generated letters on a stencil, applied to the stone and sand-blasted. They never do

anything by hand at all.

"If I use a lot of a particular stone then I go to the quarry – I like to check it's top quality. I was using so much Forest of Dean sandstone for the restoration work on Kingsland Church in Herefordshire, I went to meet the quarrymen. It's interesting to find out about the geology of stone. In masonry, you should know about your material: you need to know its compressive strength. Some stone even smells: Portland stone has a lovely fishy smell, but Forest of Dean smells pretty horrible – a nasty, musty odour."

"Every commission is a one-off. I always think I would like another job, like the Mary Morgan memorial, for example. She was an early 19th-century woman hanged for the murder of her new-born son. The original stone was falling apart and I had to do an exact replica. That was fascinating – it is very difficult to do a faithful copy even though you are tracing it, you can never get the spirit of the original cutter. Many of my jobs are memorials, which I do in my workshop. Then I go to the cemetery to fix the head stone with my wife and baby daughter."

"If I am doing a church restoration, I have to be on site, which means up the scaffold. I did a local church last winter. I took a few days off when it was snowing, but otherwise I worked through the elements. In the summer, it's lovely up a scaffold: I especially enjoyed Bath Abbey – great view."

"The most interesting job I did was building the Memorial Pagoda at Milton Keynes in memory of a Buddhist monk. I wasn't under any time pressures and designed a lot of the detail, but now I have a family I don't like to go off for weeks on end."

"I tend to knock off at 7 or 8 in the summer and 6.30 in the winter. You can't work late into the night – it takes too much concentration. And I don't like working more than eight hours in a day. I get too exhausted. A lot of it depends on light in the workshop – in the winter especially. You can't do lettering in bad light."

"Once a week we run an evening class for six or seven people to do carving. In the summer, we run weekend courses. They are knackered and a bit annoying because people always do nicer things than I get to do. I would like to take my own course so I could do exactly what I wanted."

"I love my work. I really do. I particularly love lettering, but then anything gets tiring if you do it for too long. Even thinking about it makes me excited, but by bedtime I am so worn out. I simply pass out."

Bel Crewe

A little local trouble

'Was I witnessing a high-level wife-swap?'

This has not been a happy week for two of Scotland's island communities. The residents of Graemsay, in the Orkneys, are in a fighting mood after council members voted to axe the island's only school. The closure of Graemsay School will mean that its lone pupil, nine-year-old Kevin Pepper, will now have to travel by ferry to school in Stromness on the mainland. This week the news was announced that production problems have delayed a new ferry service.

On Eigg, it is the plight of the island's cattle that has infuriated the locals. On Tuesday the island's owner Maruina sold all the remaining beasts bar one – Barney the Limousin Bull, father of nearly all the island's cattle. Poor Barney failed to sell because of missing papers and will go under the hammer at a later date. For Eigg islanders the sale was a tragedy. Stockman Donald McFadyen told *The Herald*, "I don't know how they will adapt to the climate in other parts of the country." Now residents fear this is the start of something more sinister and rumours of an island clearance are rife.

This is the season when birds and animals stake out breeding territories – and none of our resident species make more noise about it than the buzzards.

The other evening, whistles burst out from both sides of the valley. The first calls rang from the wood on the hill to the south, my right, instantly answered by others from my left. Seconds later a big, dark shape floated over from the south, black against the sky. Then a second appeared from the north. A pair coming together? Apparently not: like ships in the night, the two passed each other and carried on without the least deviation. Was I witnessing a high-level wife-swap?

Then two birds soared out over the southern skyline, wheeling in circles. Suddenly another pair appeared low over my head. Cries blasted off from every direction. A fifth bird started calling from somewhere behind me. The squeaks of little owls were drowned out by the piercing volleys from overhead. Not until darkness fell did the big hawks at last settle and fall silent. Almost as vociferous are the carrion crows,

that helpers frequently borrow it, and it whizzes about the country with a mobility it never achieves in life. By such means, keepers can ensure that their own ground will be clear for the critical months in which game birds breed, because at a certain point, all surviving crows settle down to nest in whatever territories they occupy and no more cross-country movement takes place.

It is not only the predators which move around. Even humble rabbits seem to migrate about now, moving down out of the woods, in which they have spent the winter, to breed in the hedgerow burrows which form their summer homes.

The only creatures which seem hell-bent on staying put are the greylag geese on our neighbour's farm. In past years one or two pairs have arrived in February and bred on the lake in the valley: then, come autumn, these pairs are taken off for wintering grounds elsewhere. Last summer, however, they seemed to find conditions so congenial that they never left. Three pairs of parents raised a total of 13

goslings, so that by August there were 19 hefty birds devouring the grass and mess up the fields with their slimy droppings. The longer they stayed, the more irritated the farmer became, but being fond of all wildlife, he could not bring himself to shoot them.

There they remained throughout the winter, and now, as the mating urge comes on them, chaos reigns in the flock. The ganders are constantly demonstrating – hissing, thrashing their wings, shaking their heads and extending their necks in menacing fashion – and it is hard to see how many geese are going to settle down in one relatively small area: there are not enough individual territories to go round.

No doubt nature will sort things out somehow. It may be that, if the birds are all closely related anyway, this year's eggs will prove infertile and produce no offspring. Should that happen, migratory instincts will probably reassert themselves, and autumn will once again see the geese on their way.

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property

Why aren't people snapping up country homes in East Anglia?

By Anne Spackman

On a graph comparing regional property prices over the past decade East Anglia rises like the Matterhorn in 1988, a high peak above the national average. Now, eight years later, the region lies in the lowlands, underperforming the general trend. If you were an old-fashioned property reviewer, you would surely be buying into East Anglia.

But this gloomy view of low prices and slow recovery is only half the picture. It applies only to those parts of East Anglia — the Fens, much of Norfolk and north Suffolk — which lie away from the coast and beyond the normal commute.

Elsewhere, in the prime parts of the region, the picture could hardly be more different. On the north Norfolk coast, the Suffolk coast, in the smart suburbs of Norwich, in the Stour Valley and, more than anywhere, around Cambridge, buyers are lining up to buy period property. Where houses are cheap there are no buyers, where they are expensive, there are no sellers.

Estate agents who handle good quality homes in and around Cambridge dusted down their forms for "best and final offers" — where buyers are competing for the same property — more than two years ago. Though 1995 saw a dip in activity, the competition has resumed this year. James Barnett of Savills in Cambridge is one of many



East Anglian values: Top, an example of a house that is still more than 25 per cent down on its peak value of £675,000 in 1989. For sale today at £495,000 with Savills. Above, an example of an East Anglian house that has almost recovered its peak value of £265,000 in 1990. Currently on the market with Bidwells for £245,000.

agents who claim they cannot get enough good quality houses to satisfy the demand. "We go to best and final offers nine times out of 10 on decent family houses," he said. "Each time you see the same buyers, minus the one who got the last house, with a few new ones, too."

Savills put a price tag of £355,000 on a thatched country house with four bedrooms and three reception rooms in a village just outside Cambridge. It sold, under competitive bidding, for more than £400,000. Such is the demand that agents are increasingly doing private sales, in which they find a buyer for a property without ever

putting it on the market. In Cambridge itself, where family houses are in even shorter supply and the university always lurks in the background as a potential bidder, prices have risen even faster than in the villages. Bidwells, which has offices across the region, has charted the price movements of a Victorian semi-detached house in the town and a country house south-west of the city, Dunesbury House, a four-bedroom, three-reception-room village property would have been more expensive than the Victorian semi in 1985. Now the village house is for sale at £227,000 having appreciated by 214 per cent, while the town house is priced at

£245,000, a rise of 253 per cent.

Similarly, in south Suffolk demand for good family houses in areas commutable to London has outgrown supply. Mark Oliver of Savills in Ipswich said prices in the Stour Valley, with good rail links to the City, fell by only 20 per cent in the recession and have nearly recovered in the past two years. However, in north Suffolk prices crashed by between 35 and 40 per cent and have barely risen off the bottom since then.

So why the great divide between the popular and unpopular parts of the region? Bidwells sees this as a clear-cut example of the way the property market has fractured. The areas which are prospering are those with a strong jobs market or within easy reach of one. The houses which are selling are the prime ones. In the past, those buyers frustrated by the lack of choice and high prices in their favoured area would have looked further north and east. Now they either buy what they want or they don't buy at all.

"People are not prepared to travel so far," said Mark Oliver of Savills. "The 'grab everything' years are gone. People don't want a long journey. They want to see their children during the week. They are interested in their quality of life." He believes people will not go beyond the maximum commute of one and a half hours. "Places which are too far away from the station or from a good

road are of no interest."

The "good" road in Norfolk is the A11, which has been upgraded in recent years. However, the end of the government's road-building programme means the dual carriage-way stops short of Norwich, prompting fears that businesses may move nearer to Cambridge.

Mark Stewart, who runs Bidwells' Norfolk office, said demand for the best properties is now stronger than it has been for years and, as a result, prices look set to rise. They have a long way to go. "We have very few houses which sell for in excess of £350,000," he said. "A few years ago that figure was £200,000."

So what can you get for your money? Savills in Cambridge has just sold a 9,000 sq ft country house with a lodge, three self-contained flats, a lake and five acres for under £500,000 in the Fens. Bidwells in Norwich is about to market a four-bedroom, four-reception-room period cottage with a tennis-court near Blakeney for £220,000. The speculators may not be moving into East Anglia, but other buyers will find the region looks very good value.

Savills Cambridge 01223-322955, Norwich 01603-612211; Bidwells Cambridge 01223-841842, Bury St Edmunds 01284-767338, Norwich 01603-763939

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One of the first apartments of the Dockland warehouse pioneers to come back on the market — Studio 26 at The Limehouse Cut — was designed by its architect owner. The 900 sq ft space has been divided by a curved wall which separates the bedroom and shower room from the kitchen and living space. The apartment, which has a balcony, parking space and a communal roof terrace, has a service charge of £977 a year and is being sold by Knight Frank (0171-515 6565) for £125,000.

For What It's Worth

Buying a house will be more affordable this year than it has been for a generation, according to the TSB Affordability Index. It says the typical buyer can expect to spend £25,70 out of every £100 they take home on a mortgage — the lowest figure since 1978. In 1990, the figure was £71,30. Next month's tax cuts are a major factor in improving affordability.

John Elbourne, retail director of the TSB, says, "The figures have been good now for three years, but they relied on weak prices — not something that inspired buyer confidence. This year will see affordability based on slowly rising prices, falling mortgage rates and strengthening earnings. Taken together, these factors will cut by 10 per cent the amount of their cash people have to budget for their mortgage."

Who's Moving

Dill Cotton, the former head of BBC television, is selling his Victorian villa in Surrey. The six-bedroom house in East Molesey has four reception rooms and a large studio/games room. It is being sold by Knight Frank in Esher for £625,000.

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Scotland's near-perfect union of landscape and artifice

By Simon Calder

Never mind heritage. What about sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll (but mostly drugs), interleaved with squalor? Irvine Welsh's story *Trainspotting* has succeeded where Unesco failed, putting Edinburgh on everyone's map. The city's tourist board is probably horrified.

Dawn reveals Edinburgh's skyline to be a near-perfect collage of landscape and artifice. In some ancient seismological scuffle, a scattering of peaks sprouted in the heart of what is now Lothian. Tall and weatherworn, Arthur's Seat provides a blustery platform precisely 823 feet above the glassy Firth of Forth that confines the city's expansion north. At about the height of Arthur's cleft, the Salisbury Crags jut into the first fringe of habitation. Beyond these jagged rocks are the softer lines of Calton Hill, a dome of stone that punctuates the east end of the city centre. Three structures deck it: the Observatory, an array of Classical columns that suggests an early attempt to bolster the cliché "Athens of the North", and a cairn symbolising hopes for the restoration

of a Scottish parliament. That huge, blunted wedge in the middle of your field of vision supports the Castle, whose garrisons have enforced the 1707 Act of Union for nearly three centuries. Doddering stone houses cling to its skirts and melt into its volcanic crumples to form the Old Town, while to the north the first ruddy flickers of sun alight on the stern Georgian rooftops of the New Town.

No Crawley or East Kilbride this – when town planning was conceived in Edinburgh, elegance and order were valued more than economy and compromise. Old and New Towns have just been recognised as a World Heritage Site by Unesco, a fact of which few seem to be aware.

Queensferry Road draws your eye past the Water of Leith towards the hills of Fife, linked to Lothian by the twin pillars of the Forth Road Bridge. That march north into Edinburgh's heart of the city centre. Three structures deck it: the Observatory, an array of Classical columns that suggests an early attempt to bolster the cliché "Athens of the North", and a cairn symbolising hopes for the restoration

Except, of course, you're not. To become even a passing acquaintance of this schizophrenic city, you need to

work hard at the relationship. You can tackle the tragic underbelly if you wish (see the *Trainspotting* location guide, right), but most visitors will prefer to keep a straighter, narrower path through the city's core. Prince's Street has pride of view, open along one side to the finest civic landscape in Britain. But the Royal Mile is yet richer, the stuff of World Heritage and the magnet to which every traveller is drawn.

Start at the city's first-ever tourist attraction. The Honours of Scotland comprise the country's crown jewels: a sword, mitre and richly jewelled crown. They evaded successive raids until the Act of Union, when the constitutional trappings of Scottish royalty were consigned to a casket in the Castle. In 1819, the chest was opened and put on public display. A contemporaneous official ootie anticipates the need to regulate tourism: "150 persons only will be admitted every lawful day, between 10 and three o'clock."

Today, thousands of tourists infiltrate the Castle every day, and pay £5 rather than five pence for the privilege. For that, you get to borrow a

state-of-the-art CD player, rich in sound effects, that puts the confusion of bartlements in perspective; shame about the red Ford Sierra parked among the cannon.

The tourist trail is all downhill from here. One Scots mile east (further than the Imperial version), the Queen's third official residence makes up in atmosphere what it lacks in stature. Unlike the showy Royal piles of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, Holyrood Palace is a masterpiece in gaunt, grey stone. To one side, the shattered remains of Holyrood Abbey dissolve into the mist, the peace disturbed only by rumbles on the road to London; the A1 begins a few hundred Scots yards from here.

Between its noble bookends, the Royal Mile is an eminently democratic thoroughfare. Places such as the Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre take the tourist-as-marketing-opportunity approach, and tempt in visitors with the prospect of a blended thimbleful of product after an hour of soft sell. But if you just want a pint of milk and a paper, then head down hill to find one of the more proletarian (and practical) shops. All the way along, you feel constrained by the tall, hooded stone on either side, the sombre tones mirrored in the line of hattered cobbles that guides you along the royal prospect. At the Heart of Midlothian, a coronary-shaped cobbble halfway along, watch how many passers-by pause to expectorate on the stone. Locals and tourists split freely and hope for good luck.

Looking for this spectacle is the best way to locate Parliament Square, in a capital whose national assembly was "adjoined" 300 years ago. Close to the Heart, but tucked behind the High Kirk of St Giles, you find a car park. This is Parliament Square – and the burial place of the Protestant reformer John Knox. He lies beneath space numbered 41. Fine brushstrokes decorate many of Edinburgh's nooks, but this artlessly stencilled paint above the tomb of one of the city's most influential figures does not count among them. World Heritage is a strange affair in Scotland.

Edinburgh tourist information: 0131-557 1700.

Above: Prince's Street, the wide heart of Edinburgh. Right: *Trainspotting* anti-hero Renton

Main photograph: Simon Calder

travel celtic tales

Everything you need to know to go *Trainspotting* in Edinburgh



The first time I went to the cinema in Edinburgh, my grandmother took my brother and me to see *The Sound of Music*. Last Sunday, we siblings went to the movies in the Scottish capital again, but declined to invite her along. A friend gave grandparental guidance about *Trainspotting*, suggesting that wholesome Julie Andrews types were in short supply.

Trainspotting is an express ride around my grandmother's home town, focusing on the margins and the marginals – the underclass that figure in statistics for crime and HIV. Edelweiss is out the opium poppy is in.

The film starts on Prince's Street, where the anti-heroes, Renton and Spud, are fleeing from security staff at John Menzies. They live a hand-to-mouth existence along the road in Leith. Parts of this venerable port retain their mercantile good looks, but much has been laid waste and replaced by "schemes" – council housing estates. Renton, Spud and pals are "schemes", surviving in a filthy flat. The shoplifters are finally apprehended heading towards Leith along Calton Road, one of the many streets off middle-class Prince's Street.

The ensuing court case is held among the legal cluster at the heart of the Royal Mile and Renton immediately celebrates the suspension of his sentence at a pub. The film is unspecific about precisely which one of the 1,000-plus licensed candidates is chosen, but the book indicates the obvious one: Deacon Brodie's. Here a screenplay or two intersects. William Brodie was a local worthy who led a double life. According to a 1788 edition of the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, after dark he became "a gambler, a thief, dissipated and licentious". He fled to Amsterdam (as, later, does Renton) and was hanged the same year. He became the model for Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, currently in production. At the end of the film of *The Pride of Miss Jean Brodie*, the anti-heroine reveals she is a descendant of the erring deacon.

After a pint or two of Deacon's Best, go in search of the Worst Toilet in Scotland. The closest you will get, thankfully, is the angular disarray of apartment blocks and shops on Pennywell Gardens, west of the centre. Suddenly you cross the invisible frontier into safe family values. The verdant parkland is exactly the sort of place where you would take your Gran for a walk. Just watch out for Renton and his air rifle lurking in the bushes.

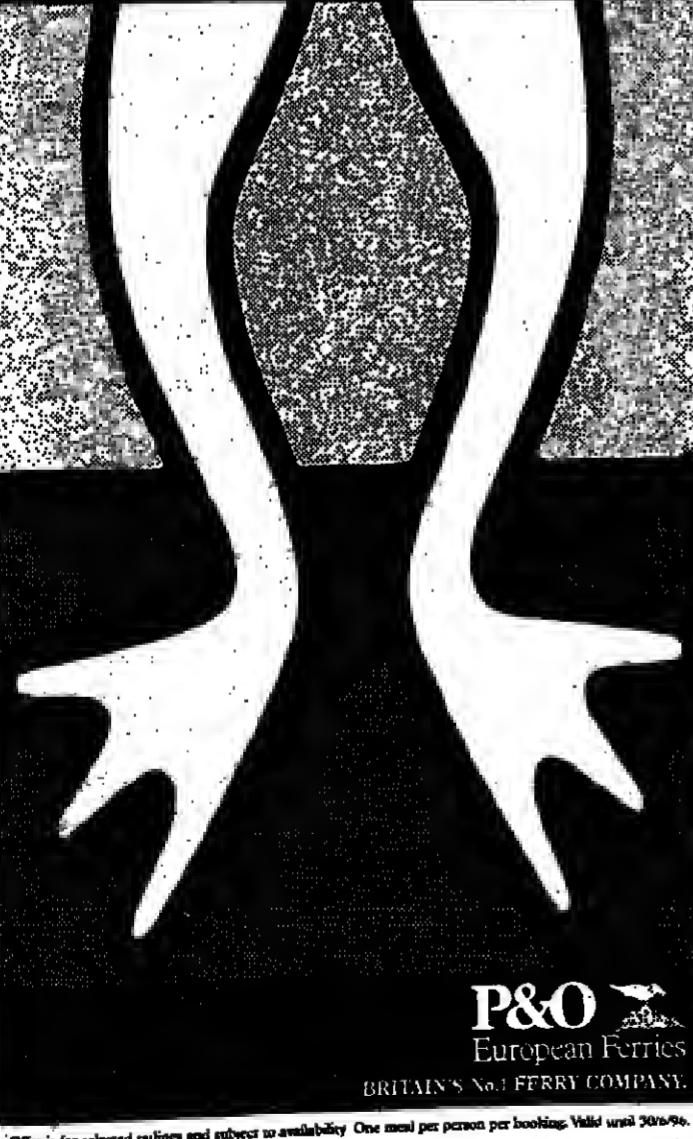
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Fancy seeing you here

Sean Thomas felt curiously at home in Java: he found a volcano, a walled city and his local supermarket manager

Twenty miles north of the ancient Javanese capital of Jogjakarta, 500 miles east of the Asian entrepot of Jakarta, halfway up Gunung Merapi - the sacred Javanese "firemountain" - I walked into a small, dark, fly-blown bar and ran into the manager of my local Sainsbury's, in Islington.

I hadn't planned this; the world just keeps getting smaller. And it was pretty lucky, in a way. For ages I had wondered why Sainsbury's hadn't knocked through a door to the car park. Here, in this lamplit, wood-panelled bar - full of the aromas of frying chilli and fresh coconut milk, waiting in from the street-side eating-stalls (*warungs*) - I got the chance to find out.

The brooding volcano under which we drank and chatted is reputed to be the most active spot in the furiously volcanic archipelago that is Indonesia. She more than lives up to her fearsome reputation. The manager of our hotel (the Vogel, clean and spartan, 8000 rupiah, or four pounds a night), had told us that to climb the Old Lady we'd have to be up pretty early. Struggling out of bed before dawn we donned our hiking-boots and rucksacks and set off in the direction of the wispy summit. We got as far as the roadblock. Gunung Merapi had woken up with a nasty hangover; she was angrily putting out clouds of lethal sulphur gas, and coughing up the odd half-ton lava bomb - and I suspect she was in no mood to see a couple of scruffy Brits crawling all over her. Three-quarters of a mile from the main ascent the police turned us back, for our own safety. We didn't really mind: standing on the special viewing-platform we could hear the rumble of imminent eruption. It was enough.

We hailed one of the Indonesian public minibuses (*bemos*), which are cheap, packed, slow, and plentiful, and travelled into the serene, sprawling, historical city of Jogjakarta ("Jogja" to locals and aficionados). Jogja is the backpacking capital of Java, where discerning Aussies, and others doing the Asian trails tend to congregate, in preference to madcap Jakarta, or touristy Bali. The food here is cheap and good; the hotels are cheap and quite good; there's a legion of services that have sprung up to cater for the non-package traveller - airline agencies, change houses, authentic craft and batik shops. Most of these are situated in the Sosro area, near the station.

South of Sosro lies the ancient centre of the city-state, the sultan's court, or *kraton*. Here

between 1750 and 1950 the gamelan-playing, dagger-wearing upper classes of Java honed their culture to an exquisite edge; the place still has a slightly superior, aristocratic air. The sultan's palace and parliament - his real power was taken away in the 1940s, after the Indonesians threw off the Dutch yoke - is a disappointing sight. It looks like your grandmother's bungalow just outside Newquay, and the gaudy railings and multi-coloured chandeliers are unmistakably nouveau. The surrounding area is more interesting - a walled-off royal city wherein live the courtiers who spend their days glorifying the sultan and his lovely sultana. Lots of the dwellings in this area have cages full of songbirds hanging outside the front door. Walking down one of the flowery alleyways the music of the birds fills your ears - a sweet, liquid lullaby.

The absence of obvious religious buildings in the walled city exposes one of the peculiarities of Indonesian life. The country - all 1,900,000 square miles of it - is said to be 90 per cent Muslim. But Indonesia has adopted a very mild form of the faith, in deference to its Christian and animist peoples, and its Buddhist background. Take a half-hour *bemo*-ride from central Jogja to Borobodur, and you can see how deeply rooted the old faith is. Borobodur is a huge Buddhist temple that sits amidst the rainy green lushness of coffee fields like an enormous grey cowpat. Carved in the eighth century, this tuffa-stone temple is said to be the third greatest Buddhist monument in the whole world, after Cambodia's Angkor Wat and Burma's Pagan. I don't know about the bronze-medal rating: it's certainly a calmly spiritual place. I spent a whole day marvelling at Borobodur's delicate sculptures, climbing its vertiginous steps, dodging its sapphire-blue dragonflies, and watching the thunder and lightning play across the dark mountain-scape to the west.

Between Jogjakarta and Jakarta lies the real Java: green, beautiful, volcanic, superfertile, chockers with people.

Everywhere you look - if you aren't looking at palm groves and banana trees and water buffaloes and torrential rivers of milk-chocolate brown water - you can see people tilling the fields in black upside-down-saucer hats, or picking tea, or whipping cows, or bicycling home from work: from the silversmiths, or the woodcarvers, or the Japanese motorbike factory.



Gunung Merapi, the sacred Javanese "fire mountain"

Photograph: Robert Harding



SIMON CALDER

Buy a seat-only deal on a charter flight. And you may get more than just a ticket. Often the tour operator will issue an accommodation voucher, to maintain the fiction that you are being sold an inclusive holiday rather than simply a cheap flight. You are not expected to take up the offer. On a Thomson charter to Athens, I arrived at the allocated hotel and asked to be shown to my room. Instead, I was shown two things: first, the notice threatening heavy "service charges"; second, the door.

It appears I was lucky to be given accommodation in the correct country, let alone the right city. Richard Madge of Boxhill writes with an inside story. He used to work in telephone sales for a tour operator whose policy was to discourage uptake completely. To this end, he was told to supply accommodation "at a campsite 400 miles away across the Slovakian border in the Tatra mountains." Anyone who persisted was warned of "unspecified charges for linen, washing facilities, etc." Mr Madge never heard any complaints from returned customers, and supposed they are still stuck halfway up a central European mountain. The practice, as far as he is aware, continues.

This week TWA joined the ranks of smoke-free airlines between Britain and the United States. Robert Breckman of London writes to suggest that no-children flights are the obvious next step. Having been subjected to a cacophony of screaming babies on two recent flights, it is surely intolerable that the majority should be held at the vocal mercy of the minority. Parents seem incapable of controlling their infants and blatantly refuse to take any action against the noise."

Mr Breckman accepts that his view may not be universally popular, but says he would be prepared to pay a premium to travel in peace.

Holiday bargains, as Jeremy Skidmore says overleaf, may be in shorter supply this summer than last. But reassurance that Britain's travel industry offers the best value in Europe arrives from Prague. An entrepreneur has combined the cheap coach trip between the Czech capital and London with a standard First Choice package to the Gambia. So if all the sunbeds at your resort have already been reserved by Kafka novels, you'll know why.

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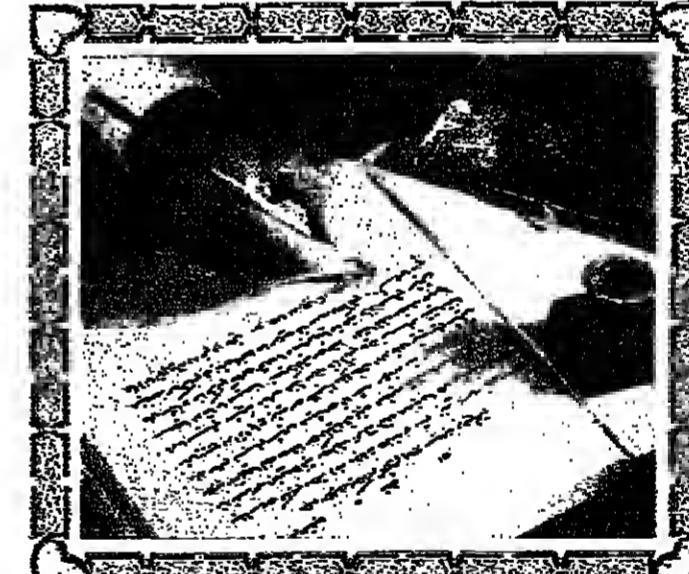
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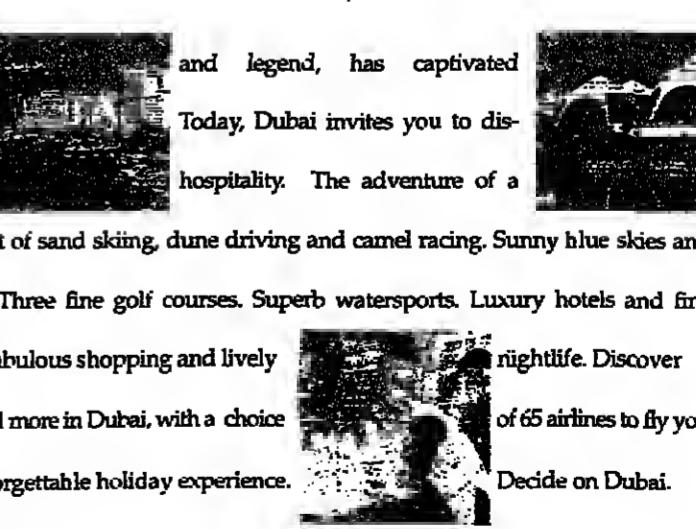
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So when should I book my holiday?

A new monthly series in which Jeremy Skidmore answers some readers' common problems

The tour operators are still saying there won't be enough holidays to go around this summer - are they correct? It certainly doesn't look like it. For months tour operators have warned that there are fewer holidays on the market this year than in 1995 and people should book early to avoid disappointment. But so far it's all fallen on deaf ears because people simply don't believe the operators. Last minute bargains have been available for years, so why shouldn't they be around this summer?

The customer seems to have been proved right once again. This week Cosmos broke ranks with the other big tour operators by slashing prices on holidays in May, the first full month of the summer season. The £99 holiday is back, with Cosmos offering a week on the Costa Brava for under £100. (If you want to see if any remain, call 0161-480 5799 or ask your travel agent.)

The others can be expected to follow suit, even though there are certainly fewer holidays on the market this year. Several months ago the big tour operators decided to reduce their capacity by around 11 per cent because they were unable to sell all their holidays last year. When summer '96 brochures were launched last September there were probably just under 9,000,000 summer packages on the market, one-tenth fewer than last year. But sales have been so sluggish that there are still too many holidays - about half of them - left to sell.

Most of the top operators are currently taking holidays off the market, but probably not enough to match supply with demand. The three biggest - Thomson, Airtours and First Choice - have all got airlines (Britannia, Airtours International and Air 2000 respectively) that they need to fill with their own holidaymakers. Thomson has already said it won't cut

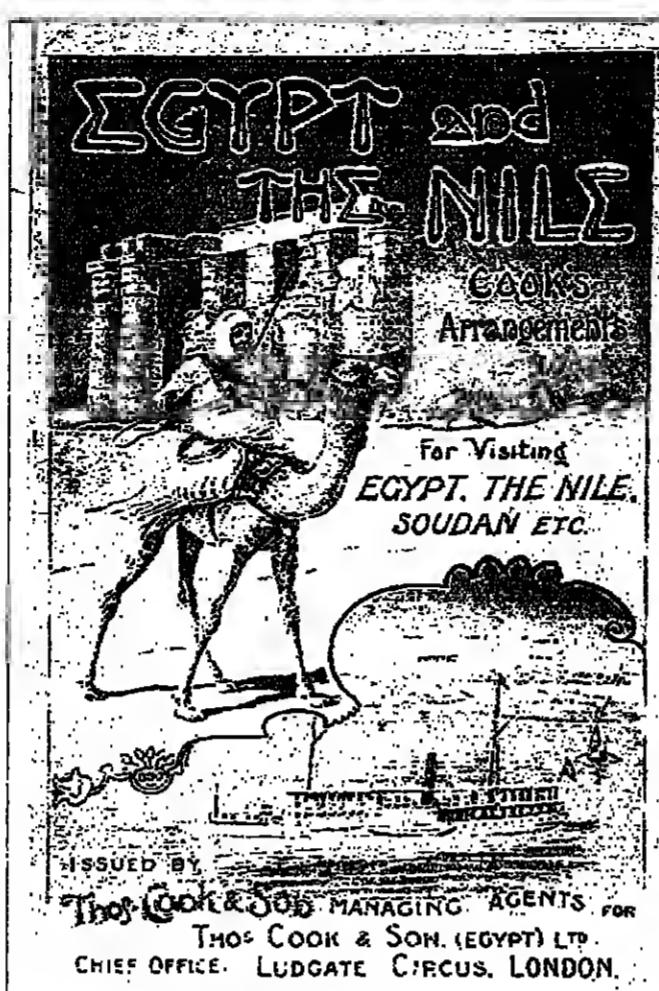
capacity further. In short, there will be enough holidays to go around this summer, but don't expect quite as many last minute bargains as last year.

So when will you be booking your summer holiday?

In early June - about a week before I want to go. It will still be early summer so there will be plenty of holidays left and, no doubt, various last-minute bargains to tempt me. But don't forget, I'm flexible. I'll turn up at the travel agent asking for a holiday for two and be prepared to go anywhere that's hot and half decent. That's not everyone's cup of tea. Anyone who has a specific destination in mind would be wise to book earlier. So would families who have to travel during the peak school holiday period of mid-July until the end of August. There are still plenty of free-kids deals around, but they will probably have all gone by midsummer, which is the one period when demand for holidays could rise to the same level as the supply of holidays.

I went to Thomas Cook to book a fortnight in Spain. The company offered me a package, but it turns out that Thomas Cook doesn't actually run this type of holiday itself any more. What's going on?

Even Thomas Cook admits the way it sells holidays is confusing to the holidaymaker. Pick up a Thomas Cook brochure and inside you will find another company's products. The chances are that your fortnight in Spain would be with Sunworld because that company has a special arrangement with Thomas Cook for summer package holidays. Cook has similar arrangements on other types of holidays with about 25 to 30 companies. For example, if you picked up its Florida '96 brochure, the holidays would be with British



Niles past: a vintage Thos Cook poster

Airways Holidays: in the Disneyland Paris brochure you would find holidays from Paris Travel Service. Thomas Cook started offering other companies' products under its own label in 1988, because it found this was a more cost-effective way of doing business.

The tour operators all pay Thomas Cook a commission for the arrangements. However, Thomas Cook does run its own

long-haul programme. So if you book a Nile cruise in Egypt from a Thomas Cook brochure, you really will be travelling with Thomas Cook.

I travel to the States frequently on business and always book over the phone with my American Express card. But last time I used it, the travel agent was very snappy about it. Why? They probably thought you were a con man. Unfortunately, a

number of travel agents have fallen victim to fraudsters posing as travel agents with an Amex card. In one case, a man wanted tickets and cash at very short notice to be charged to an Amex card. The man sent a cab around to the agent to pick up the package. He turned out to be a con man, but as no address was obtained from him, the credit card company would not take responsibility. Little wonder, then, that your innocent call set off alarm bells with the agent. Hopefully you can convince your agent that you are genuine and then your transaction will go through smoothly.

I've heard that hotels in London are charging a fortune because of high demand. But hasn't the recent bombing campaign frightened people off? Yes, I'm afraid it has. Demand for central London has taken off in the past couple of years and five-star hotels have been able to charge up to £200 a night for a single room. Hoteliers were looking forward to a boom summer, but the bombing campaign has changed all that. The problem is that London hotels, especially those in the luxury sector, rely on US visitors for much of their summer business and US citizens are particularly sensitive to acts of terrorism. They tend to stay well away from anywhere that is trouble.

Many hoteliers, not wanting to be named for fear of IRA reprisals, admitted they have already received cancellations and they say that they expect more. So, with demand failing, anyone travelling to London this summer may well be able to pick up some bargains.

Send your questions to 'Inside Track', c/o the travel desk, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, E14 5DL.

Snow's up by Chris Gill

Skyline drama

Majestic scenery is high on my list of requirements for a really satisfying skiing holiday. Some resorts qualify by offering the immediate drama of peaks and precipices in the ski area - the Eiger looming over the runs between Grindelwald and Wengen, for example. Others offer wide Alpine panoramas, seen to best advantage from high up on the slopes.

Alpe-d'Huez, Flaine and St Moritz are among the resorts that have special views of this kind. But, last weekend, I stated that one mountain-scape stands out, above all others, in the skiing world: the view southward from the slopes of Crans-Montana, in Switzerland. Those who love mountains should see it.

The mountains, ranged along the Italian border, form a spectacular skyline, with the deep valley of the Rhône in the foreground. Spread over a panorama of almost 180 degrees are scores of sharp peaks, from the Dom in the east (Switzerland's highest at 4545m), past the

Manerhorn, Dent Blanche,

Snow report

"Is the piste so hard?" The world's prettiest ski mountain, waved her edge fil at the line of skis awaiting her attention in Saas-Fee. Yes, early this week even north-facing slopes at 3,500m were hard. Many Swiss resorts have had mainly sunny weather for two to three weeks now; temperatures first went up and then down, leaving a hard base at altitude and ice lower down. Things softened up later in the week; conditions in Andermatt on Thursday were superb. High French resorts have generally had the best

conditions this week - the snow has stayed softer, while in Italy, the Dolomites resorts are looking rather thin. Most Austrian resorts reported some new snow last weekend - 20cm in Saalbach, for example. The already good conditions in the Pyrenees got a further boost in midweek. In eastern Europe, Bulgaria is looking good. North America has the best conditions; many resorts have had fresh snow this week. Both Mammoth in California and Snowbird in Utah claim over 4m on the upper slopes.

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While inflation has for many years routinely devastated the value of British fixed-interest securities, making gilts a dismal risk, in Germany government bonds have paid an above-inflation rate in every single year since 1950 – a remarkable record

Is there anything to the idea that financial markets tend to take on the national characteristics of their people, rather as dog-lovers are said to grow to resemble their owners? It is an intriguing thought, and one that may have more than a grain of truth in it. Is it really a coincidence, for example, that the biggest, most enthusiastic and most technologically advanced stock market of them all is to be found in the United States, where Wall Street – crashes and all – stands as a monument to the unbounded self-confidence and economic dynamism of Americans? Or that the most easily manipulated of world's major financial markets are to be found in Japan, a country where conformity and face are accorded so much greater value than in the more individualistic cultures of Europe and the United States?

The idea that you can discern something of national character in the behaviour of a country's markets is prompted by another of the fascinating long-term studies of stock and bond market performance produced by the stockbrokers BZW.

A few weeks ago, I commented on their popular annual UK gilts/equity study, which showed (among other things) that our bond and stock markets tend to do best when inflation and growth are both moderate by historical standards. It is excess

– in either direction, down as well as up – that British investors really cannot stand.

Now BZW have produced a similar statistical exercise on the German markets, which brings out graphically the very different qualities of the two nations, and also highlights the different economic preoccupations of the two countries. Everybody knows that the German economy has been much more successful than ours since the end of the war.

The single most potent indicator of their superior economic performance is felt daily by anybody who needs to exchange their pounds for marks. With some momentary exceptions, such as 1980/1, the pound has fallen steadily against the mark for most of the last 30 years. It is now, mainly thanks to our inferior record on inflation, worth less than a quarter of what it was a generation ago. The strength of the mark is in turn a tribute to the legendary vigilance and toughness of the Bundesbank, the German central bank, which adopts a most thorough-going aversion to anything that threatens the value of its national currency.

The easy-going "what-the-hell" attitude that Britain displays towards the value of its currency is anathema in Germany. So how do you think the German stock and bond markets have performed over the post-war period? Well, the answers, as



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

BZW documents, are mostly exactly what you would expect. German investors are exceptionally risk-averse and their financial system is heavily biased towards bank rather than equity finance. As a result the German stock market remains much smaller, relative to the size of the economy, and also less liquid than its counterparts in the UK or the US. The bond market by contrast is much more well developed.

The combination of a strong currency, relatively low inflation and risk-averse investors is reflected in the habits and performance of the main asset classes in Germany. Here are some of BZW's conclusions, based on their analysis of post-war market behaviour:

1) Although German shares over the whole period since 1945 have done better for investors than bonds, this is almost entirely due to the dramatic rerating of the equity market that occurred in the 10 years after the end of the Second World War, when the German economy was effectively

rebuilt from scratch with astonishing speed and efficiency. Company profits grew at an exceptional rate throughout this period.

2) Since 1960, however, bonds in Germany have actually produced a higher annual return than equities. While inflation has for many years routinely devastated the value of British fixed-interest securities, making gilts a dismal risk, in Germany government bonds have paid an above-inflation interest rate in every single year since 1950 – a remarkable record.

3) The upshot is that, while shares in both countries have produced similar rates of return after inflation (6.7 per cent), the divergence in government stocks has been much more marked. While German gilts have averaged an impressive 4 per cent real rate of return since the war, the comparable British figure is a shameless zero per cent. The moral seems to be that if a German government could borrow from you, buy its debt issues. Unlike its British equivalents, it may actually be worth the paper it is printed on.

4) While the German stock market is now heavily influenced by the behaviour of other world markets, the primary influences on the German bond market are the relevant economic "fundamentals" – what is happening to German inflation and how the Bundesbank is running monetary policy. The rest of the world may shape German share prices, but it is Germany that shapes everyone else's interest rates.

BZW also points out that the profile of German society is changing. Middle-aged Germans today are haunted by the memories of the hyperinflation of the 1920s and the war earlier generations. Many are also now starting to inherit the fruits of the wealth that their parents made in the years of the so-called post-war economic miracle. Their attitudes to risk are also easing.

All this creates the conditions in which Germany may start to learn to love shares and wean itself from its traditional love affair with bonds – just as many people in this country are beginning to believe that inflation here may after all have been licked. Comparison of the two BZW studies shows that the UK gilts market has actually more often than not produced a slightly higher real rate of return than its German counterpart since the early 1980s.

In investment terms, that is a real turn-up for the books. It certainly would have been unthinkable 20, 30 or even 40 years ago. Even so, it will be a brave person who bets against the pound continuing its long-run decline against the mark. To do so would, after all, display a most uncharacteristic patriotic fervour.

Looking for long-term growth?

Then investment trust opportunities might be for you. By Bill Fowler

Split-capital investment trusts have two elements. They consist of income shares, which receive all the income, have a fixed redemption price and are suitable for investors looking for a rising income flow; and capital shares, which earn nothing until the trust is wound up and its gains are paid out. As such they suit investors looking for growth.

Fleming Worldwide is a new split-capital investment trust being launched in conjunction with the bid for Fleming International High Income; also a split-capital trust and soon to mature. The new trust has an interesting portfolio of investments, including high yielding equities and emerging-market debt instruments. Investors should, however, be aware of the possibility of the new issue trading at a discount in the after-market owing to a general weakness elsewhere in the split sector.

M&G is also launching a new split capital trust, again connected with a bid for one of its existing split trusts, M&G Dual Trust, which has around one year to run. The new M&G Equity Trust has an unusually long life of 15 years. A unique but very welcome aspect of the new vehicle is the absence of up-front costs, as M&G has covered launch costs itself. However, this is offset by a higher than average annual management charge. The short-term outlook for the new trust is slightly disadvantaged by the fact that most other split trusts trade at package discounts, including those run by M&G.

Perpetual's Income and Growth Trust has been launched to coincide with the PEP season. This

trust can be expected to enjoy strong support both in the offer for subscription and in the after-market, due to Perpetual's track record in this area (UK income growth shares) and their strong retail presence. We would highly recommend this trust to investors.

Following on from its highly successful smaller company unit trusts, Hill Samuel is launching a UK Emerging Companies Investment Trust. This is in the form of a placing and open offer, and should prove an effective means of investing in UK smaller companies. Availability of shares may be limited, however, as the issue is being capped at £35m.

Finally, Templeton is launching a Central and Eastern European Fund, which will invest in the emerging markets of Europe. The issue will be in the form of a placing to institutions only.

In addition to the many new issues in the market there are also a number of 'C' share issues to raise additional capital, many of which look interesting. Scottish Asian Investment Company invests in the Far East, excluding Japan. Run by Murray Johnstone, the trust has enjoyed consistently excellent performance. The premium to net asset value that the shares had been trading on has now disappeared, which does not make the 'C' shares such an attractive proposition, as no warrants are being issued to subscribers to the 'C' shares. In fact the 'C' share holders will suffer, along with existing shareholders, from any future dilution from the existing warrants as they are converted into shares.

Pacific Horizon also invests in the Far East region, exclusive of

Japan. Performance has been good in the recent past and the ordinary shares are currently trading at a small premium to net asset value. The low costs of the issue and the inclusion of warrants make the 'C' shares an attractive means of entry into the trust.

Herald Investment Trust is a UK smaller companies specialist. It has enjoyed good performance and the 'C' shares may prove an attractive alternative to the existing shares, which currently trade at a premium.

Another small company trust, Saracen Value, is proceeding with a placing to recall for existing shareholders. The trust's managers have a strong following, which has been earned by consistently good performance. Investors should note that this issue is not available to private individuals via an open offer.

For those looking for a more spirited investment, International Biotechnology Trust is having a placing and offer of 'C' shares, with warrants available on conversion. This trust invests in biotechnology shares, mostly in the USA. Cur-

rently it is trading around par, but it has traded as wide as a 25 per cent discount to net asset value. It is vital to appreciate that this is a specialised area for investment, which could produce volatile results.

A reconstruction in the trust sector is worthy of mention. LGT Asset Management is changing the investment policy of USDC Investment Trust, which will soon be renamed as GT Income and Growth Trust. Having previously been deployed on an international basis, it is now invested in UK equities. Shareholders will have the option of accepting shares in the new trust and/or units in GT Global Bond Fund, which may be redeemed for cash.

The change of policy has already been well received by the market, producing a re-rating in the share price. Nevertheless, the trust is still attractive on a medium-term basis, and the cash exit via the bond fund represents a significant uplift in value.

Bill Fowler is Investment Manager at GVG Asset Management.

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The cost of peace at Lloyd's – but the news may not bring peace of mind for investors facing ruin

Names will learn today how much they are being asked to contribute to the insurance market's £9bn losses. John Eisenhammer, Financial Editor, reports.



Disaster: Being a Lloyd's name was once seen as easy money – but recent years have brought a sinister new meaning to the phrase unlimited liability

Lloyd's names, the investors who put up the cash for the London insurance market, will find on their doorsteps today the first estimate of the final cost of buying peace at Lloyd's, although it may not buy them peace of mind. Many risk losing their homes and large amounts of money.

There were 34,000 names underwriting at Lloyd's in 1988, but today the number of active names is just over 12,000 – an unparalleled statement of flight and dispossession. Since 1988, Lloyd's of London has racked up losses over £9bn – a devastating turnaround in the fortunes of many names, by definition people of above-average means, who pledged every bit of their wealth to cover eventual liabilities.

Traditionally, Lloyd's had been regarded as a safe investment – securities lodged with Lloyd's earned interest, the insurance business made a profit and the cheques rolled in regularly each year. Unlimited liability was merely a theoretical risk.

Instead, Lloyd's provided a stark lesson in the potential risk of financial market involvement. A combination of natural disasters and poor management led to many syndicates of insurers making massive losses. Litigation followed, and angry names refused to pay for what they think was at best irresponsible behaviour by professional managers, who actually decided what risks to underwrite and what premiums to charge.

To avoid the real risk of Lloyd's itself going bust, the insurance society has devised an unprecedented rescue plan. It is having off all its pre-1993 policies – notably the ruinous asbestos and pollution liabilities in the US – into a separate re-insurance company called Equitas.

Names are being asked to pay a final, individual premium into Equitas, to cover all the potential liabilities from their old policies. It means that for a price, they can do what has not been possible before – sign a cheque and walk away.

For many names, this means finding more money. To help the settlement, Lloyd's is offering at least £2.8bn in credits and debt forgiveness to names, reducing Equitas' bills and buying off litigants. Many thousands of people are facing one of the most difficult financial decisions of their lives. To help, the *Independent* answers the key questions.

Who is affected?

Every one of the 34,000 names. Even if you stopped underwriting some time ago, names remain liable to the end of their days for claims on policies written during the years they were active in the market.

Which is the key figure?

The figure on page one,

Summary Data of the

Indicative Finality Statement. This shows an estimate of what, if anything,

you will have to pay Equitas to reinstate all your old policy liabilities and draw a line under your affairs at Lloyd's. For some names, their investments already pledged to Lloyd's will be more than enough to cover the cost of Equitas, and they get some money back.

The less fortunate will still need to find more cash.

What do I do?

Don't panic even if the bill looks more than you can afford. Special extra funds are there for the hardest hit. Moreover, these are estimated bills, and final premiums are likely to be lower for most people, because Lloyd's is privately confident it will raise more money to offset names' payments between now and when final statements are dispatched in May.

What do I do next? Consult your financial adviser and banker. These are highly important decisions with considerable tax implications for some, and time is short. Planning is essential, and Lloyd's requires early notice if you want to take advantage of special schemes and assistance. The deadline for payment of the finality bill is late July.

What if I think it will be hard or impossible to pay my bill?

Inform Lloyd's promptly on the appropriate form. Anyone with an estimated finality bill in excess of their funds at Lloyd's should consider applying for additional credits from the settlement fund. These will be allocated on the basis of need. To assess this, names must submit to rigorous means testing by Lloyd's financial recovery department, declare they have not dissipated assets, and have everything signed off by an accountant.

What are the special schemes?

Lloyd's is planning a special mortgage or loan facility, to help hard-hit names get around the difficulties of age, the complexity of their affairs and the need to raise up to 100 per cent loans against their homes. This could also help names whose funds at Lloyd's are secured by their homes. Repayment could be over 25 years, with no new insurance required. The project depends on enough names taking it up to make it worthwhile for the lenders. There will also be a structured payment facility, spreading the cost of finality over five years.

Do I have a say in all this?

Yes. The entire Lloyd's settlement plan depends on the outcome of a vote by all names in July, after they have received the final Equitas bills. It will be a choice between finality, at a price, and uncertainty, which could prove more or less expensive in the years to come, as Lloyd's as we know it is wound up, and the lawyers and debt collectors take over.



LOOSE
CHANGE

An independent financial adviser is offering readers a 24-page guide to Venture Capital Trusts, providing information and recommendations on all the 11 VCTs currently on offer, together with an updated end-of-year tax planning guide with added pension planning strategies. Both are available free to readers applying by March 18. Write to David Aaron Partnership, Shelton House, High Street, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes.

Barclays Bank is keeping open until March 16 applications from savings account holders to defer interest due in March until after the start of the new tax year, when the tax rate will drop from 25 per cent to 20 per cent for basic rate taxpayers.

The stockbroker Foster & Braithwaite has launched a pension fund investing mainly in zero coupon shares offering a tax-free yield of 7.9 per cent to redemption. It can be used to provide an income by

SELLING A PROPORTION OF THE HOLDINGS EACH YEAR.

The Bristol-based Insurance Service is offering discounts of 10 per cent on comprehensive motor policy premiums to drivers of cars over five years old rising to over 20 per cent on cars 10 years old. Managing director Syd Pennington says: "In our experience people who have older cars are less likely to make claims."

Most motor insurance companies have singled out mature and retired motorists as the targets for lower premiums, says the motor insurance specialist Bill House-Hammond. Young drivers have missed out because they are all tarred with the irresponsible 'boy racer' brush. HHH has now introduced a Lifestyle rating which takes into account the occupation, professional qualifications, marital status and driving record of individual young drivers, which can cut their motor insurance costs by 50 per cent or more, it claims.

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Most motor insurance companies have singled out mature and retired motorists as the targets for lower premiums, says the motor insurance specialist Bill House-Hammond. Young drivers have missed out because they are all tarred with the irresponsible 'boy racer' brush. HHH has now introduced a Lifestyle rating which takes into account the occupation, professional qualifications, marital status and driving record of individual young drivers, which can cut their motor insurance costs by 50 per cent or more, it claims.

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money

That crisp £20 note is a fake. How can anyone tell?

Hi-tech criminals can produce forgeries that will fool bank cashiers – and even some anti-counterfeit machines, writes George Campbell



Tracey Cullen was accused of passing them fake notes. But the building society was wrong – the notes were proved genuine

Although there were 2,500 prosecutions for passing forged notes last year and some £25m was seized, one banknote in a hundred in circulation is a forgery, and numbers are on the increase.

Although many shops and filling stations use a variety of devices, including marker pens and ultra-violet light screens, to detect the cruder fakes, the best forgers, including £10 and £20 as well as £50 notes, are now almost impossible to detect by eye, thanks to advances in sophisticated computer technology and colour printing. It is estimated that some £100m worth of fake notes are now washing around in the system.

The Bank of England plays down the gravity of the situation. "It's not serious," said a spokesman. "Less than 1 per cent of the £18bn of genuine money in circulation is fake."

Bui critics disagree. John Hall, head of security at the 1,700-strong Co-Operative Wholesale Society chain, reckons it is getting worse: "Over the last year, counterfeit money through our stores has jumped 20 per cent."

The quality of the forgeries has improved enormously and the counterfeiters have switched from photo-copying to computer-generated graphics, which give a cleaner image and are more difficult to detect."

A genuine note should feel crisp, have a metallic

strip, a watermark and sharp clear printing. Forgers at the sharp end of technology can now reproduce all these qualities.

The consumer, and not the banks or building societies, takes the hit when a forged note is discovered. Under the Forgeries and Counterfeiting Act (1981), anyone passed a fake banknote must hand it to the police with no compensation. Passing on fake notes is a criminal offence.

Banks and building societies, however, are not legally obliged to reimburse you even if they issue you with forged notes through their cash machines. Also, counterfeit notes are now so sophisticated that even experienced cashiers at the counter – not to mention their security equipment – cannot always tell the difference between a real note and a fake.

The Building Society Ombudsman is about to give a decision on a landmark case involving Bradford & Bingley and a Yorkshire housewife.

Tracey Cullen took legal action after the society's Selby branch wrongly accused her of including 19 forged notes in a £4,800 cash deposit.

Tracey explained: "It was a nightmare. I was shamed and humiliated by a member of the Bradford & Bingley staff in front of other customers. The Bank is convinced counterfeiters would turn to making cash out of the compensation fund. "It would be like asking us to

minutes. The notes were taken into the manager's office and the police were called."

Mrs Cullen was then frog-marched out of the branch in front of other customers and taken to the police station. After her arrest, police called in experts from Yorkshire Bank to examine the suspected forgeries.

"The police attitude changed completely when the bank said the notes were genuine. I was released on bail pending the outcome of forensic tests by the Bank of England," she explained.

"Next morning, the police informed me the tests had proved conclusively the notes were genuine and the society had dropped the charges."

Counterfeit notes are also plaguing small businesses, according to Stephen Alabamis of the Federation of Small Businesses. "We have heard strong rumours that the banks are instructing their staff to feed fake money back into circulation.

Quite often, hard-worked bank staff will sometimes hand the forged note back to the customer to avoid embarrassment."

While acknowledging the problem, the Bank of England argues vehemently against compensating those who lose out to the counterfeiters. The Bank is convinced counterfeiters would turn to making cash out of the compensation fund. "It would be like asking us to

underwrite the crime," says a spokesman.

"Big high street concerns have invested heavily in anti-counterfeiting security," says a spokeswoman for the British Retail Consortium. "Staff are trained to spot dodgy notes, and the bigger stores will also get regular visits from the police warning them of the latest scams."

A British company has developed a new micro-processor system able to detect forged notes. In trials, it picked out 4,000 fakes provided by the Bank of England and the police, and the makers say it will detect counterfeits which defeat systems that use ultra-violet light or marker pens. Only 10 per cent of the test notes were caught by ultra-violet systems.

John Wilkinson of Mel Electronics in Wokingham, Berkshire, which has developed the new Cashguard, said: "Some of those systems can be fooled by coating a fake note with ordinary suntan oil products."

Cashguard costs £250 and can fit on to a check-out desk or till. A note is inserted in a slot and light with a wide range of wavelengths is shone on to it. Sensors measure how much light is reflected back, and at what wavelengths.

The micro-processor analyses this combination and compares it against a stored profile of the characteristics of valid notes, sounding an alarm for fakes and suspect notes.

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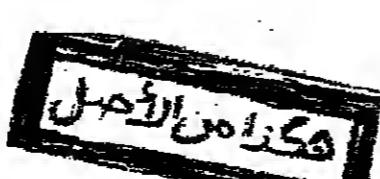
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	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max fee %	Incentive	Redemption penalty	
Flood rates						
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.25 for 1 year	70	0.75%	—	
Stephens BS	01756 700500	3.75 to 30/4/98	75	£295	Free unemploym + 3 mths B&C ins	
First Mortgages						
Scarborough BS	0800 0800088	6.85 to 1/5/01	75	£275	—	
Derbyshire BS	01322 841000	3.89 for 2 years	75	£125	Free val, fee refund, 250 remortgages	
Northern Rock BS	01422 333333	4.69 to 30/4/99	90	—	Free valuation	
First time buyers fixed rates						
Bristol & West BS	0800 100117	0.95 to 31/1/97	90	£275	—	
North West Home Lns	0800 400999	4.19 to 31/3/98	95	£145	—	
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	6.99 to 1/5/01	95	£295	—	
First time buyers variable rates						
Principality BS	01222 344188	1.00 to 1/6/97	90	—	—	
Greenwich BS	0181 858 8212	3.99 for 2 years	95	—	1st 5 yrs: discount reclaimed	
Derbyshire BS	01322 841000	4.79 for 3 years	90	£125	1yr free ASU, free val	
Second hand houses						
Unsecured	Telephone	APR	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)			
Direct Line	0141 248 9966	14.90%	With insurance £114.41 Without insurance £102.59			
Midland Bank	0800 182180	15.48	£216.54 £202.14			
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	16.20	£113.94 £103.33			
Secured (second charge)						
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	8.60 Neg	£3K - £15K Advance 6 mths to 25 years			
Royal B of Scotland	Via branch	9.30 70%	£2.5K - £100K 3 years - retirement			
First Direct	0800 242424	9.80 80%	£3K to neg Up to 40 years			
Car finance						
Telephone	Card		Authorised % pm	Unauthorised % pm	APR	Annual fee
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	2.18	29.5
Alliance & Leicester BS	0800 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20	29.8
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.79	9.9	2.18	29.5
Personal loans						
Telephone	Payment by direct debit		Min income % pm	Rate % pm	APR	Annual fee
John Lewis	Via store	—	—	0.926	11.50	— 0
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.87A	—	1.00	14.00	£12
Sears	Via store	1.94	—	1.14	14.50	— 0
APR Annualised percentage rate.						
IVV Loan to value						
E available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.						
H Annual fee waived after first year if £10k + charged to card during previous year.						
All rates subject to change without notice.						
ASU Accidental, sickness and unemployment						
H Special rate until 30 June 1996						
G annual rate 5% above R Fleming basic rate.						
H Equivalent to base rate.						
8 March 1996						
MONTEFACTS 01892 500677.						
8 March 1996						

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Interest or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Permit BS					
01702 297444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.20	Year
01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£2,500	5.10	Year
0345 252000	Padthaway	Instant	£5,000	5.37	Month
01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£20,000	6.00	Year
Buckinghamshire BS					
01494 873064	Chiltern Gold	Postal	£1,000	5.30	Year
0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Postal	£10,000	5.60	Year
0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Telephone	£25,000	6.00	Year
0345 252023	Instant Access	Postal	£50,000	6.15	Year
Co-operative Bank					
0161 834 9465	45 Day	45 day	£25,000	5.55	Year
0245 242424	50 Day P	50 day P	£15,000	6.00	Year
0245 242424	90 Day S	90 day P	£30,000	7.20	Year
0800 272505	120 Account	120 day	£5,000	6.50	Year
Scotish Widows Bank					
01245 829223	Guaranteed Growth	31/1/97	£5,000	6.30	Maturity
0245 222200	Fixed Rate Bond	2 yr bond	£1,000	6.40F	Year
0245 252423	Fixed Rate Bond	2/4/98	£2,500	7.05F	Year
01232 314050	Windfall Fund	4 yr bond	£1,000	7.00F	Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
West Bromwich BS	0121 628 8024	Guaranteed Growth	31/1/97	£5,000	6.30
Woolwich BS	0800 222200	Fixed Rate Bond	2 yr bond	£1,000	6.40F
Stratford & Swindon BS	0345 252423	Fixed Rate Bond	2/4/98	£2,500	7.05F
First National BS	01232 314050	Windfall Fund	4 yr bond	£1,000	7.00F
Robert Fleming/S&P					
0800 829024	Higher Rate Deposit	Instant	£1,000	5.25	3 Months
Kleinwort Benson	01262 502404	HCA	Instant	£2,500	5.50
Alliance & Leicester BS	0116 271 2727	Alliance	Instant	£5,000	5.00
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£25,000	5.25
Premier Life					
0800 414111		1 year	£20,000	4.80FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	2 year	£5,000	5.25FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	3 year	£5,000	5.50FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	4 year	£5,000	5.75FN	Year
Abbey Life	01202 292373	5 year	£50,000	6.30FN	Year
Investment Account					
		1 month	£20	5.00	Year
		—	£500	5.50	Year
		—	£25,000	5.75	Year
Income Bond					
		3 month	£2,000	6.25	Month
		—	£25,000	6.50	Month
Capital Bond					
	Series J	5 year	£100	6.65 F	Maturity
		12 month	£1,000	6.25 F	Year
		—	£20,000	6.50 F	Year
Pensioner's Gated Income Bond					
	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00 F	Month
NS Certificates (tax-free)					
	43rd issue	5 year	£100	5.35 F	Maturity
9th Index linked Children's Bond					
	Issue H	5 year	£100	2.50+RPI	Maturity
		—	£25	6.75 F	Maturity
F post only					
F fixed rate					
All sales are shown gross and are subject to change without					

money

'Don't join company pension schemes without advice'

BAD DEALS: In her desire to move on and up in the world of advertising, Marcella Speller made all the right moves. Except when planning her pension

Marcella Speller is marketing director of Internet Holiday Rentals, the first company in the UK to specialise in using the Information Superhighway to promote private homes available for self-catering holidays around the world.

After 10 years in advertising Speller took an MBA and has since held senior and board level marketing appointments with blue-chip companies.

She says that her worst mistake has been the cumulative neglect of her pension plans.

"After graduating at the University of East Anglia in 1971 my first job was with British Rail. During your twenties, of course, you don't even think about pensions, and when I left to join an advertising agency in 1974 it was still the last thing on my mind.

"In my twenties and thirties, while working my way up the career ladder, I had a series of jobs, most of which I left within two years

as I was headhunted for the next one. There was no such thing as a personal pension in those days. The whole pensions industry was designed for people who started work at 16 and weren't expected to leave the company until they were 65.

"When my generation came along, and moving jobs became a way of life, we discovered that you couldn't take your pension with you. Even worse, if you left the company within two years, you didn't get the benefit of employer's contributions. You were simply refunded for payments you had made during the period of your employment."

Over the years Ms Speller worked her way up in a variety of different companies, then in 1981 took a year off to do an MBA, before joining Heineken as senior manager of European projects, based in Amsterdam and Ireland.

"In 1984 I returned to Britain and set up my own business offering consultancy, venture capital and

Marcella Speller: Feels 'cheated' by her treatment under the pensions system of the Eighties

marketing for hi-tech companies. By then I was 34. I took out a self-employed pension, but I had only paid £180 into it when I was offered a job as senior marketing manager with Avis. The regulations in those days meant I couldn't have continued with my personal pension even if I had wanted to because I wasn't self-employed any more.

"Instead, my contributions were frozen until I reach 60. I don't know whether I can free them under the new legislation because it's all so complicated. There are so many reams of paper, it's as if they don't want you to understand it."

Between 1985 and 1989 Ms Speller worked for three different companies in senior marketing roles, but each time she was made redundant because of restructuring.



"I wasn't in any of the jobs for as long as two years, so each time they just handed my pension contributions back, mostly without interest and always without employer's contributions. Even so, it wasn't until I was approaching 40 that I thought: 'Hang on minute, I'm half-way through my career and what pension have I got to show for it?'"

"My next job was as sales and marketing director for a company in the travel industry, and once again I was forced to contribute to its pension scheme. This time I resigned due to an intolerable boss. A week later, while I was still working out the notice on my 12-month contract, he fired me for gross misconduct so that he wouldn't have to pay me.

"I took legal action, won my case and got my pension handed back, but still with no employer's contribution, no interest, nothing. By now I was 42 and I felt really cheated. Pension contributions are meant to be a tax-efficient investment yet my employers had been taking that money, using it and getting the interest on it themselves.

"I've been working now from 1971 to 1996, and – allowing for a year off to study – that's 24 years during which I should have built up a sizeable pension. After all, I was earning up to £70,000 a year."

"Instead, I lost a lot of money. The rate of inflation between 1976 and 1981 alone was fluctuating between 12 and 18 per cent, so even a return of 5 per cent would have been dishonest. It was daylight robbery and I was furious."

The trouble is, when you're starting a new job you've got so many things to think about, like the salary, and whether you'll get on with your new boss. It's very difficult to ask what will happen to your contributions if you leave within two years because it wouldn't go down very well.

"Fortunately, one of the first reforms of the Thatcher era was the introduction of portable pensions. It was a recognition of the fact that times have changed: people do get made redundant, companies do get downsized, and if you haven't been there for two years you are in a vulnerable position. It was 1995 before I finally took out a private pension scheme, and now that I have, no company in the future will be able to force me to contribute to theirs."

"I've never been very good at investing money. I like earning it and spending it on things like houses, but I don't like the uncertainty of putting it where I can't see it. And I don't think I'm alone: even now that so many women are financially independent, we still don't give enough thought to our future security."

Other people, she says, should learn from her mistakes: "The fact is, you have to look after yourself, because nobody else is going to do it. If you are likely to move in less than two years, don't join a company pension scheme without seeing an independent financial adviser first."

"Make sure you take out a pension plan that suits your personal needs, and if you're still in your twenties, don't put it off. Do it now."

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Managing your money for the longer term

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Something extra from your cash dispenser

By Dido Sandler

Does your cash dispenser give you extra money absolutely free? If it's a NatWest branch hole in the wall, it probably does. From Monday money-off vouchers will accompany cash withdrawals at a thousand sites up and down the country.

First to emerge through the slot will be discount offers of up to £50 on Seafarers cross-Channel ferries, and a promotion around the launch of the Walt Disney video *Pocahontas*. Others to follow include vouchers for large stores, manufacturers and assorted high profile brands.

This type of voucher system has been very successful in tests, with brands such as Sainsbury's, Coca Cola and Mars achieving redemption rates as high as 11 per cent. Comparable leaflet drops, by contrast, achieve only a 1-2 per cent response rate.

It's all about added value, says NatWest's marketing department – giving customers extra service from their cash till.

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Equitable Life

The final steps towards a happy retirement

So what do financial advisers actually do? Sort out bad investment advice, that's what. By Michael Royde

The first principle of providing independent financial advice is to establish the objectives of a client before recommending suitable investments. It is no good choosing an investment portfolio for growth if the client requires income.

Two couples came to see me recently: both were retired. The first couple were the parents of my wholesale broker, Norman, who deals with my general business, i.e. house insurance. Norman's father is a member of Lloyd's of London, suffers from serious ill-health and lives in a nursing home. His mother has a shortfall of income because she has to pay the nursing home fees.

His parents have a portfolio between them of approximately £400,000, which is currently providing an income of £20,000. The stockbrokers who were looking after the portfolio had not

thought about the client's objectives. They were providing income out of the portfolio through a mixture of gilts and equities, which were taxed, and investing a portfolio of tax-free Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) for growth.

Similarly, the Lloyd's funds (the investments lodged with Lloyd's as security for possible losses) were orientated towards producing capital growth rather than income and hence were not making proper use of the ability to carry forward losses.

I proposed that the PEP portfolio should be switched to provide the highest possible income, producing an annual return of 10 per cent paid quarterly. I suggested that the portfolio of gilts be switched to a lifetime income bond bought from an insurance company, which increased the net yield by approximately 30 per cent.

The risks attached to the lifetime income bond, which is based solely on

War Loan, are the same as the gilt portfolio — they are rated AAA, but are slightly more volatile. With an increase in yield of 30 per cent net, and investing a portfolio of tax-free Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) for growth.

It is obviously more sensible to select investments for PEPs to provide income rather than capital gains, because most people will pay no capital gains tax anyway, but will almost always be liable to pay income tax, either at basic rate of 25 per cent (24 per cent next tax year) or 40 per cent.

Again because Norman's father was a member of Lloyd's with some carry-forward losses it was better to switch his highest-yielding shares into his funds at Lloyds in order to make full use of the losses and eliminate any tax liability from this source of income.

These simple changes increased the net income by over £5,000 per annum. There was some discussion as to whether he should remain a member

of Lloyd's, writing only on life or motor syndicates, in order to make use of the inheritance-tax exemptions that apply to funds at Lloyds.

However, there is only any point in doing this if both the wills of the parents are correctly written, making use of the nil rate band together with funds at Lloyds, which are regarded as business assets providing they are commensurate with the names' underwriting.

My next clients were Victor and his wife. He had recently retired from a job in the construction industry with a good pension. His investments had been looked after by one of the major clearing banks and they had managed to generate no capital gains whatsoever for the last five years. Victor had had some part-time consultancy, giving him an income of approximately £30,000 a year for the last few years, but this income was about to cease.

Victor and I spent several hours dis-

cussing his objectives and we agreed that the investment portfolio should be split into several parts.

The first part was to switch his general PEPs into a high-yield PEP, again yielding 10 per cent, payable quarterly. The funds invested in single company PEPs were re-invested in one of the water companies where the stockbroker felt there was a good prospect of dividend growth.

Rather than opting for the lifetime income bond, Victor chose a bond with a yield of 11 per cent (this yield has subsequently dropped to nearer 10 per cent), with the return of the original capital dependent on a modest level of growth from the UK and US markets.

The balance of the middle third was made up of guaranteed stock market bonds for Japan and a number of unit trusts and investment trusts.

The third part of the portfolio was

property in the area in which Victor lived, at a cost of around £100,000. Victor is currently looking at the market in his area through normal agents as well as examining the local auction houses.

In addition we used up his unused pension relief by using a small part of his capital for an immediate retirement annuity. Briefly he placed £20,000 into a pension plan. This entitled him to tax relief of £8,000. He immediately cashed the contract, returning him £5,000 tax-free cash. The net investment was £7,000 (£20,000 - £8,000 - £5,000), which purchased a joint life annuity of £1,500 per annum, giving a gross return of approximately 20 per cent.

It goes without saying that use was made of the wife's allowances and basic rate tax band.

I was pleased to be able to achieve both couples' objectives by increasing their income to meet their expenditure.

Building societies under pressure

By Clifford German

Pay the marketing departments of the building societies, fighting for advantage in a competitive market complicated by the struggle between mutual societies and those opting to become public companies.

The demand for new gimmicks and discounts has created an unprecedented range of products. Then there's the Chancellor's insistence on cutting base rates in quarter-point instalments — at a time when competitive pressures force lenders to respond to every change. Meanwhile savings packages have to be juggled to try to minimise the adverse impact of falling interest rates and retain as much existing business as possible.

Response to the latest cut in base rates was swift yesterday. Within an hour Halifax Building Society cut its standard variable mortgage rate from 7.49 per cent to 7.25 per cent immediately for new customers and from April 1 for 2.4 million exist-

ing borrowers. It means the interest on an average 25-year endowment mortgage of £60,000 will fall from £346.43 to £335.33 a month after tax relief, saving £11.10.

Abbey National has also cut its standard variable rate

from 7.49 per cent to 7.24

per cent with effect from

Monday for new borrowers

and May 1 for existing bor-

rowers. On a typical repay-

ment mortgage of £60,000 it

will reduce monthly pay-

ments from £426.51 to

£417.62, a saving of £8.89 a

month.

The Portman Building Sociey responded to the latest drop in base rates and the promise of further cuts to come by slashing the rate on new fee-free fixed-rate mortgages between now and May 1998 by a full percentage point to 4.99 per cent.

Alternatively borrowers can

opt to pay 5.99 per cent fixed

until May 1998, with no

redemption penalty if they

decide to remortgage else-

where or pay off their loan

over the next three years.

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Penalties for early retirement, penalties for varying contributions, even penalties for dying. You begin to wonder just whose pension it is.

You see, in order to pay commission to brokers and中间人, some companies impose severe penalties on their personal pension plans, should you wish to make changes.

Happily, The Equitable Life has never paid commission to third parties for the introduction of new business. You don't have to commit yourself to paying identical contributions every year. And, should you decide to retire early, your benefits would be exactly the same as if you had chosen that date initially.

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Perpetual

going out



CINEMA

CASINO It's overlong and hideously violent but Martin Scorsese's dissection of Las Vegas is redeemed by operatic visuals, a camera so alive you can feel it pulsing and a pair of magnificent performances from Robert De Niro and Sharon Stone (above).

UNDERGROUND After his scrappy American folly *America Dream*, Emir Kusturica reaches heights that his earlier work never hinted at. The film's ambition makes you giddy.

WITHNAIL & I Bruce Robinson's nasty, grubby little comedy gets a deserved re-release. Starring Richard E Grant and Paul McGann.

Ryan Gilbey

THEATRE

Warts and All Compilation of witty theatre songs by Drewe and Stiles, performed with gusto by the incandescent Alison Jeeves and Aled Jones. Yes, the Aled Jones, *Watermill*, Newbury. Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme (above) Frank McGuinness's elegiac First World War play in an outstandingly lucid and moving production.

Don't miss:

In Rep, *Batlican*, London EC2. — Lord Leighton Three London exhibitions at the RA, the V&A and Egerton House celebrate the centenary of the death of the only British artist ever to have been elevated to the peerage. Royal Academy, London W1.

David Benedict

critics' choice



EXHIBITIONS

Spellbound Six artists and four filmmakers explore the crossover between art and cinema. It's an inspired move in which the works by Hills, (above), Pollock and Greenaway are particularly successful. Hayward Gallery, London SE1.

Cezanne After all the hype this show easily lives up to expectations, particularly the final room with *The Large Bathers*. Tate, London SW1.



POP

Everything But the Girl The self-titled Vocalist album has some fine songs, one of the most impressive in English pop to hit the charts since *Bristol University* (1977-92). 15.99. 25/3.

The Autons Return from the time of obscurity with dark-mooded material, and the best in their new album produced by Steve Albini. University of London 19.99. 22/3.

The Flaming Lips This rock reconstituted date for three-time Grammy-winner Wayne Coyne, who caused a few storms due to his cranky nose. Tickets: £10. 15/3. 10pm. 25/3.

Crashy trousers Cleverly produced boot support. The Garage, London 19.7. 244. 0044.

Angela Lewis

DANCE

Midori Welcome visit from the Japanese dancer, who has won international acclaim for her fluid, expressive style. The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2. 19.99. 21/3.

Matthew Royal Charming, elegant, and a bit of a show-off. The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2. 19.99. 21/3.

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Laura Edwards

Arts and entertainment listings

FILM

WEST END

THE ADVENTURE PRESENTS (15) Romantische comédie. Place: 7.10pm, 11.30pm. 11/3-31/3.

ANGELS AND INSECTS (15) Adaptation of AS Byatt's novel. MCA/EMI Screen. £3.50. 8.21.

BABE (12) A pig's attempt to avoid landing up as a sandwich. MGM/UA. £10. 12.15.

BED OF ROSES (15) A woman's desire to block out her troubled past. Place: 1.30, 7.30, 11.15.

BISHERHEART (15) Mel Gibson dixies and stars. Odeon/Metropolis. 2.30, 7.30.

THE BROTHERS MCQUEEN (15) Thriller. MGM/UA. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30, 12.30.

LA CEREMONIE (15) French-language adaptation of Ruth Rendell's *Hider Mifflin*. MGM/Harvey. 2.15, 5.20, 8.25. MGM/Swiss. £10. 11/3-12/3.

DEATH IN A BLUE DRESS (15) Remake of the original. MGM/UA. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE (15) Steve Martin reprises his harassed father role. MGM/UA. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30, 12.30.

THE FLOWER OF MY SECRET (15) Almondine continues his tale of a frazzled woman surrounded by hickory relatives. Corman. £3.50.

HAIRY BIKERS (15) Two amateur Puffin stars. MCA/EMI. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

RESPONDING (15) Western drama. Warner Bros. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

THE SISTERS (15) A group of women who have lost their love and happiness. Odeon/Metropolis. 5.30.

THE TAKING OF PIGSBY (15) A professional gambler risks over a Las Vegas poker game. Granada. £3.50.

THREE STOOGES (15) An instant classic director sharpened with兄弟ide. Its bluster owning up to the comic. JAMM/Decade. 2.30, 5.30, 8.30, 11.30.

THE WEDDING (15) French-language adaptation of Ruth Rendell's *Hider Mifflin*. MGM/Harvey. 2.15, 5.20, 8.25. MGM/Swiss. £10. 11/3-12/3.

WOMAN ON THE BOAT (15) Epic 19th-century adventure. The Miramax. 5.30, 8.30, 11.30.

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REPERTORY CINEMAS

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE (15) French comedy. Place: 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

THE FRENCH TWIST (GAZON CINEMA) (15) French comedy. Place: 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

LA GRANDE MÉTAMORPHOSE (15) The latest James Bond yarn. Granada. £3.50.

LA HABANA (15) Known as a cult in a group of underground film iconoclasts. GMPX/Pandora. 2.30, 5.30, 8.30, 11.30.

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REVIEWERS IN PARIS

(15) Series of reviews of Parisian films. MCA/EMI Screen. £3.50.

THE RESTORATION (15) Robert Downey Jr. stars as a policeman in the court of King Charles II. MCA/EMI Screen. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

THE SILENT WOMAN (15) A woman who is accused of killing her mother in a burglar. MGM/UA. 2.30, 5.30, 8.30, 11.30.

THE SPIDER (15) A possible sex cult helps with the investigation. MCA/EMI Screen. 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

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THEATRE

MURDER AT THE FAIR (15) The Rev. George. Place: 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

THE MURKIN (15) Lynne Griffin Clark. Place: 1.30, 4.30, 7.30, 10.30.

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staying in

THE
WEEK
AHEAD

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10.30am <i>Open University: Tales from the Galaxies</i> (BBC1 1949 US). A look at the most atmospheric megalomaniacal science-fiction films of the States. Stargazing with Lee & Clegg (10.45-51).	10.30am <i>Curse of the Werewolf</i> (TV 14). Starring a host of international stars, British sportsmen and women of the century. They profile the best of the North Stars (BBC2, 11.15pm). The programme's disappointing state of the art: www.bbc.co.uk/north_star/ .	10.30am <i>Without Walls</i> (Sky 04). James Fox (above) sticks an some Edwardian chippies and plays Sir Edward Egars in this dramatised account of his relationship with young aristocrat Jellicy of Araby: the so-called "tenth muse" who inspired him to write his <i>Celio Concerto</i> (1976).	10.30am <i>Licence to Kill</i> (John Glen 1989 UK 9pm). ITV. The Ruslids are busy thawing under permafrost, so Timothy Dalton's po-faced Bond goes after Latin American drug barons (4752).	9.30pm <i>Reputations</i> (BBC2). The sorry truth behind Sir Harold Macmillan's marriage to Lady Dorothy Cavendish (above), who was in love with MP Bob Boothby and the mother of his child (6085).
10.45am <i>Modern Times</i> (BBC1 1936 US). Is there such a thing as "quality time" with the kids if you're a busy working mother? Take three of them and find out (3460-42).	10.30pm <i>Undercover Britain</i> (9pm). Two brave reporters pack a hidden camera and go look see (3882).	10.30pm <i>Mistresses</i> (BBC1). Antonia de Sanchez and Christine Keeler help out as we meet "the other woman" in the on-going series about infidelity (172269).	9.30pm <i>Leap of Faith</i> (Richard Pearce 1992 US). Uncertainty of tone is the main problem as Steve Martin's religious comical is derailed by the love of an honest waitress (685972).	9.30pm <i>The Loved One</i> (Tony Richardson 1965 UK 12.35am BBC2). Christopher Isherwood's script (adapted up by Terry Southern) from Evelyn Waugh's novel about an Englishman in Hollywood, makes a surprisingly successful transition to the screen (725239).

Review

- 10.30am *Wings* (9.15pm-10.15pm). The post-concert discussion continues, starting with how literature shaped the war effort. Friday's episode promises a defence of ER Lewis.
- BBC1**
- 6.20 Match of the Day – the Road to Wembley (R) (S) (1567652).
 - 7.30 Children's BBC: Jim Henson's Animal Show. 7.55 Playdays.
 - 8.15 Sueños – World Spanish (6278774).
 - 8.30 Breakfast with Frost (65720).
 - 9.30 Season of Change (S) (3369590).
 - 10.15 See Heart (S) (357381).
 - 10.45 The French Experience (S) (3571381).
 - 11.00 Hidden Empire (R) (S) (1300). *
 - 11.30 My Brilliant Career: George Walker, formerly of Brent Walker (R) (1229). *
 - 12.00 Countryfile (S) (1230).
 - 12.30 On the Record (26316). *
 - 1.30 EastEnders Omnibus (S) (4274869). *
 - 2.55 Balto – an Animated Hero. Plug for a new Steven Spielberg film about a cross between a wolf and a husky (S) (4612300). *
 - 3.25 The Clothes Show. In Milan, for the autumn/winter collections. A rather depressing thought: before even the first daffs of spring (S) (6748958). *
 - 3.50 Match of the Day Live – the Road to Wembley. The FA Cup sixth-round tie between Liverpool and Leeds United, with Alan Hansen and Jimmy Hill. See *The Big Match*, p30. Followed by the live draw for the semi-finals (S) (71994300).
 - 6.00 News, Weather (4588611). *
 - 6.20 Local News (535519).
 - 6.25 Songs of Praise. From the Community Church, Southampton, where congregations of 1,000 are not uncommon (S) (429720). *
 - 7.00 Antiques Roadshow. From Peebles in the Borders (S) (5306711). *
 - 7.45 Ballykissangel. This new entertainment about an English priest in Ireland is pulling in the punters – 14 million for the first episode. And Sundays are a good night for actor Tony Doyle at the moment, who's also in *Band of Gold* over on ITV. This week there are local elections and Doyle's character, Brian Quigley, is standing (S) (4717836). *
 - 8.35 Birds of a Feather Another Christmas special, retrieved from the archives (R) (S) (5089039). *
 - 9.50 News, Weather (306519). *
 - 10.05 Witness Against Hitler. James Wilby stars in a drama telling the true story of German aristocrat Helmut James von Moltke's resistance to the Nazis. See *Preview*, p30 (S) (2652233). *
 - 11.35 *Hannah and Her Sisters* (Woody Allen 1986 US). See *The Big Picture*, p30 (5045854). *
 - 1.20 Weather (8810459). 10.25pm.
 - REGIONS:** Wales: 10.05pm Wales Playhouse: Strangers in the Night. 10.35 Witness against Hitler. 12.05 Film: Hannah and Her Sisters. 1.50 News; Weather.

BBC2

- 6.15 Open University: Pure Maths (9854855). 6.40 'Maths Methods' (6057381). 7.05 Shakespeare's Henry IV in Rehearsal (5897039). 7.30 Biology (4480107). 7.55 Women's Studies: Counting the Threads (1925565). 8.20 The Baby in Your Court (4710923). 8.45 Open Advice (6278942).
- 9.10 Australian Grand Prix. An entire re-run of last night's race (S) (5803694).
- 11.30 Top Score (S) (6454749).
- 11.45 *Star Trek* (R) (5103497). *
- 12.35 Police Squad (R) (7130107).
- 1.00 *Singers Out* (Followed by Family Album) (31132).
- 1.30 Around Westminster (25284).
- 2.00 European Indoor Athletics. Live coverage from the concluding day in Stockholm (4349039).
- 2.50 *Yellow Rolls Royce* (Anthony Asquith 1964 UK). Portmanteau movie about the three owners of the eponymous motor. Rev. Harrison, Ingrid Bergman and George C Scott (40091565).
- 4.50 Under Exposed (S) (1521720). *
- 5.00 Rugby Special. The County Championship semi-finals (S) (1254).
- 6.00 Natural World. See *Preview*, p30 (S) (729687).
- 6.50 European Indoor Athletics (878823).
- 7.30 Wheeler on America. The average sentence for drug-related crimes in the US is now longer than the penalty for manslaughter, armed assault and rape – and 60 percent of America's prison population is there for non-violent narcotic crime. How so? (S) (5752515). *
- 8.20 The Money Programme. How town centres are fighting back against out-of-town supermarkets with ideas garnered in the US (S) (954949). *
- 9.00 Clive Anderson: Our Man In... Lagos. More holidays in hell as our brief-timed media celeb manager to get arrested, twice (S) (95403). *
- 9.40 Australian Grand Prix. Highlights from Melbourne (S) (598107).
- 10.20 *Earth Girls Are Easy* (Julien Temple 1989 US). Three randy aliens from outer space (Jeff Goldblum, Jim Carrey and Damon Wayans) land in Californian beautician Geena Davis's back yard. She gives them a make-over and they hit the boulevards in Temple's trashy, soundtrack-driven satire on West Coastways (156233). *
- 11.55 Weatherwatch (217590).
- 12.00 *Queen of Outer Space* (Edward Beams 1958 US). Supremely daft sci-fi about a manned spaceship which crash-lands on Venus, a planet which is populated entirely by women. Zsa Zsa Gabor headlines (8575879).
- 1.20 The Space Between the Door and the Floor. Surreal fantasy about a man waiting in his office for the girl of his dreams (3617492). To 1.40am. 2.00 The Learning Zone. To 7.00cm.

Sunday television and radio

ITV/London

- 6.00 GMTV 6.00 The Sunday Review. 6.30 News and Sport. 7.00 The Sunday Programme (98774).
- 8.00 Disney Club. With Craig Doyle, Neil Buchanan and Jenny Powell (S) (56255300). *
- 10.15 Link. A troupe of disabled actors (S) (7704738).
- 10.30 A Meditation. Nic Francis finds religion flourishing in the City of London. Mammonism presumably (44768). *
- 11.30 Blessed Are They. Eric Robson portrays "blessed are the poor in spirit" (S) (8801107). *
- 11.55 Chatter Talk. Not to be confused with... (S) (7912123).
- 12.30 Crosstalk (57039).
- 1.00 News, Weather (4873826). *
- 1.10 Jonathan Dimbleby. Qimbo's guest is David Blunkett (S) (6353565).
- 2.00 London: Countdown to the Millennium. First of five films looking at what the future holds for London (R) (16391).
- 3.00 Rugby Special. The County Championship semi-finals (S) (1254).
- 6.00 Natural World. See *Preview*, p30 (S) (729687). *
- 6.50 European Indoor Athletics (878823).
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Channel 4

- 6.25 TransWorld Sport (R) (7429497).
- 7.20 Take 5 (S) (5896300).
- 7.45 The Magic School Bus (S) (25720).
- 8.15 Hong Kong Phooey (1985854).
- 8.30 Stunt Dawgs (6275855).
- 8.55 Biker Miles from Mars (6350590).
- 9.20 The Secret World of Alex Mack (S) (2401381).
- 9.50 Earthworm Jim (S) (5491768).
- 10.15 Saved by the Bell (1718381). *
- 10.40 Wise Up. Junior reportage. Two Welsh boys waylay the Welsh minister, William Hague, and ask him to sing their national anthem (4084565).
- 11.15 NRA Raw. The Charlotte Hornets play host to the Orlando Magic (402045).
- 12.15 Mission Impossible. Some bods want to re-establish the Third Reich (693855). *
- 1.15 Board Stupid (S) (634957).
- 1.45 Football Italia. Juventus vs Lazio (52438478).
- 4.00 The Pink Panther (4928039).
- 4.10 The Rape of Tutankhamun. John Romer is in attendance at the state of the Valley of the Kings (R) (S) (258132).
- 5.30 Hollyoaks (R) (S) (768). *
- 6.00 *Forbidden Planet* (Fred McLeod Wilcox 1956 US). Classic old piece of sci-fi, based loosely on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, with Leslie Nielsen and crew crash-landing on a distant planet and bumping into Walter Pidgeon, his daughter Anne Francis, and Robbie the Robot (37920854).
- 7.50 Travel Treks. Emma Freud in Belize (987403). *
- 8.00 *Wired* World. Includes a report on London's Freedom FM, the world's first 24-hour lesbian and gay radio station (3039).
- 8.30 My Generation: The Troggs. Reg Presley and his Wild Thing remembered (R) (S) (8774). *
- 9.00 *The Oremaker* (Jim O'Brien 1988 UK). Particularly fine drama, adapted by John McGrath from Beryl Bainbridge, about three generations of Merseyside women enduring the Blitz. Uptight, respectable JoJo Plowright and Miracious Billie Whitelock are sisters – sunts of young Jane Horrocks, who is conducting a nervous love affair with an American GI (78761328). *
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- 10.40 *Salome's Last Dance* (Ken Russell 1987 UK). Oh lawks. Ken Russell at his very worst, with Nickolas Grace as Oscar Wilde having difficulty putting on his banter play so stage it at the local brothel. Stratford Johns is Hend, and one Imogen Millais-Scott stars as the dancer with the plenitude of headscarves. Miss (4130-1590). *
- 12.20 *Life, Love and Tears* (Nikolay Gubenko 1984 USSR). A medical doctor at an old people's hostel tries to create a real home for the residents. Any songs? (6251-40).
- 2.10 Four-Mations (2284985). To 2.35am.

ITV/Regions

- ITV**
- As London except: 12.30pm Anglo News (570391 2.00 GMT). 1.20pm Highway to Heaven (775774 3.25). 7.45 The Magic School Bus (S) (25720).
- ITV1**
- 7.15 Hong Kong Phooey (1985854).
- 8.30 Stunt Dawgs (6275855).
- 8.55 Biker Miles from Mars (6350590).
- 9.20 The Secret World of Alex Mack (S) (2401381).
- 9.50 Earthworm Jim (S) (5491768).
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- 2.10 Four-Mations (2284985). To 2.35am.

Radio

- Radio 1**
- 9.75-10.25am *Ken Greening 10.00*. Michael Aspel 10.30 Haynes on Sunday 12.00 Desmond Carrington 2.00 Benny Green 3.00 David Jacobs 4.00 in Marbles Hills 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00 Pam Ayres 7.00 Barry Gray 8.30 Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 Mayday It's Because... 12.05 Steve Madden 3.00-3.30am Clive Warren.

Radio 2

- 8.25-9.25am *Don Maclean 9.05*. Michael Aspel 10.30 Haynes on Sunday 12.00 Desmond Carrington 2.00 Benny Green 3.00 David Jacobs 4.00 in Marbles Hills 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00 Pam Ayres 7.00 Barry Gray 8.30 Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 Mayday It's Because... 12.05 Steve Madden 3.00-3.30am Clive Warren.

Radio 3

- 8.25-9.25am *Pauline McLynn 9.05*. Michael Aspel 10.30 Haynes on Sunday 12.00 Desmond Carrington 2.00 Benny Green 3.00 David Jacobs 4.00 in Marbles Hills 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00 Pam Ayres 7.00 Barry Gray 8.30 Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 Mayday It's Because... 12.05 Steve Madden 3.00-3.30am Clive Warren.

Radio 4

- 8.00-9.00am *Bill Bryson 9.05*. Michael Aspel 10.30 Haynes on Sunday 12.00 Desmond Carrington 2.00 Benny Green 3.00 David Jacobs 4.00 in Marbles Hills 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00 Pam Ayres 7.00 Barry Gray 8.30 Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 Mayday It's Because... 12.05 Steve Madden 3.00-3.30am Clive Warren.

Radio 5

- 8.00-9.00am *Clare Balding 9.05*. Michael Aspel 10.30 Haynes on Sunday 12.00 Desmond Carrington 2.00 Benny Green 3.00 David Jacobs 4.00 in Marbles Hills 4.30 Sing Something Simple 5.00 Pam Ayres 7.00 Barry Gray 8.30 Sunday Half Hour 9.00 Alan Keith 10.00 Mayday It's Because... 12.05



The big picture

Hannah and Her Sisters
Sun 11.35pm BBC1

Michael Caine has had many more dramatic roles than the philandering husband in *Hannah and Her Sisters*, but few that showcase so well his understated but undeniable screen presence. As he struggles vainly against his lust for the sister of his wife (Mia Farrow), he succeeds in conjuring up a variety of emotions with the minimum of grandstanding gestures, in this, Allen's typically well-constructed ensemble comedy about sex and death in Manhattan.

It's called casting against type, and it's as good a way as any of kicking lazy casting directors up the pants. Last week we had *Birds of a Feather* Pauline Quirke as a murderer serving life in the excellent *The Sculptress*. This week it's that nice Kevin Whately from *Inspector Morse* and *Peak Practice*, as a wife-beater. The occasion is Lucy Gannon's thoughtful, shocker of a drama, *Trip Trap* (Sat BBC1), and coming to think of it, it was a Lucy Gannon drama, *Tender Loving Care*, that cast Dawn French as a nurse who was bumping off her patients. And, while we're still making connections, Gannon was also responsible for Whately's *Peak Practice*, not to mention *Soldier, Soldier and Brunette*. Commissioning editors must camp out on her front lawn.

Whately is frighteningly believable as the harassed primary school headteacher given to breaking his wife's ribs as she reads in bed. And Stella Gonet hands in a virtuous performance as a woman trapped between self-loathing and a closed fist. It's the sort of drama that makes you wonder how many potentially abusive husbands-to-be are among the contestants on The

Shane Richie Experience (Sat 6.15pm TV). This, in case you missed the hoo-ha surrounding last year's pilot, is a game show for intending couples, the winning pair being married there and then on TV. Perhaps the idea could be extended to a game show for dissolving marriages – with the winning partner getting a quickie divorce and custody of the kids. Cynical? I'm only looking at the role models for those whose marriages have been televised in the past: Anne and Mark, Charles and Diana...

Remember *The Red Light Zone*, Channel 4's last night attempt (let's be charitable) to broaden the discussion of matters sexual-on-out TV screens. Their follow-up is called *The Blue Light Zone*, a season of programmes about the police, as if the TV schedules didn't already resemble the car park at New Scotland Yard. Actually, the only non-repeat amongst the four opening films is rather good. *Subway Cops* and *The Mole Kings* (Sat C4) goes on the Beat with the NYPD officers responsible for policing the 5,000 souls who have made their homes in Manhattan's sewers and subways. Witness against Hitler (Sun BBC1), meanwhile,

stars James Wilby in the story of German aristocrat James von Molbech's brave opposition to the Nazis. It's all very worthy, but I have to admit to switching to remote here. I still remember the same territory created by Dennis Potter's more interesting treatment of the drama that gave the world *Allo Allo!* plumpies of one Elizabeth Hurley.

The Natural World (Sun BBC1) looks at the wildlife that hangs out at one dragonfly-rich South African water-hole. Not another drowning water-hole film, I hear you groan. Stick with it – all I can say. Apart from the fascinating Darwinian dynamics of the situation, there are moments of high anthropomorphic comedy. Witness the crocodiles baring their tongues rather than snack on the baby impala who is joining them around. Mama is watching, you see.

And still on the subject of carnivores and parasitism, *Bookmark* (Sat BBC2) has a satisfying film about the (usually strained) relationship between biographer and subject, which neatly leaves the last word to Oscar Wilde, quoted here: "Every great man has his disciples, and it's always India who writes the biography."



The big match

Leeds United vs Liverpool
Sun 2pm BBC1

Leeds United, under the management of Howard Wilkinson, tipped by some as the man to succeed Terry Venables as England coach, are already in the semi-final of Coca-Cola Cup. Standing in their way in the FA Cup semi-final is the formidable outfit of Liverpool. Their good run is due in no small measure to the goal-scoring feats of Robbie Fowler (above, with Stan Collymore) who must surely be finding his level after competition for England's Euro '96 squad.

Saturday television and radio

BBC1

- 7.25 News; Weather (57188-J7).
- 7.30 Children's Film: Izogoud, 7.45 The Arbox Bunch. 8.00 Izogoud. 8.10 The Flintstones.
- 8.35 The Addams Family.
- 9.00 Live and Kickin'. Guests include Shane Richie, singer Louise, and Birmingham FC's managing director Karen Brady (S) (694132-48).
- 12.12 Weather (7405847).
- 12.15 Grandstand. 12.20 Football Focus. 12.55 Racing from Chepstow. 1.00 Weatherly Leasing Directory Handicap Hurdle. 1.10 News. 1.15 Motor Racing: news of today's qualifying session for the Australian Grand Prix. 1.25 Racing from Chepstow. 1.30 Bet with the Tote Novice Handicap Chase Final. 1.40 Athletics: The European Indoor Championships from Stockholm, including the finals of the men's 60m hurdles and the women's 50m. 1.55 Racing from Chepstow. 2.00 Baufort Novice Hurdle. 2.10 Rugby League: Live coverage of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final match between St Helens and Widnes (kick off 2.15pm). 3.00 Athletics. 3.10 Rugby League: The second half of this afternoon's match. 3.50 Football Half-Times 4.00 Athletics. 4.40 Final Score (6317170).
- 5.20 News; Weather (9077002). *
- 5.30 Local News, Weather (117538).
- 5.35 Cartoons (267335).
- 5.45 Big Break. Snooker and general knowledge (S) (354335).
- 6.15 The New Adventures of Superman. Lois's ex-lover arrives in Metropolis (S) (373083). *
- 7.00 Noel's House Party. A Gotcha for Jeremy Clarkson (S) (861408).
- 7.50 The National Lottery Live. Eternal perform their new single and help press the button (S) (740460).
- 8.05 Morecambe and Wise. John Mills in Ernest Wise's Escape from Stalag 54 is amongst this compilation from the 1970s (R) (547460). *
- 8.35 News and Sport; Weather (Followed by National Lottery Update) (712847).
- 9.00 Trip Trap. Kevin Whately gets nasty in Lucy Gannon's *Sister One* drama. See Preview, above (S) (9183). *
- 10.30 Match of the Day – the Road to Wembley. Highlights of the fifth-round replay between Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest, and the sixth-round tie between Chelsea and Wimbledon (R) (547199).
- 11.40 Cricket World Cup. Highlights of the first two quarter-finals (S) (535712).
- 12.50 Film 200 Motels (Frank Zappa & Tony Palmer 1971 US). Yes, that's right: Zappa and Tony Palmer – a heady brew indeed, as they have fun with Zappa's touring schedules. Ringo Starr plays Zappa, and Keith Moon plays a nun (7.58749). *
- 2.25 Weather (6512010). To 2.30am.
- REGIONS: NI: 5.00pm Northern Ireland Results. 5.30 Newsline.

BBC2

- 6.00 Open University: Linkage Mechanisms (9962828). 6.25 Maths (9941335). 6.50 Working with Systems (6159793). 7.15 East Meets West (597847). 7.40 Magnetic Earth (4515847). 8.05 Poetry (5773199). 8.30 Literature (6386915). 8.55 Understanding Music (6365422). 9.20 School in Japan (2538489). 9.45 Information Technology (4794460). 10.10 Environmental Control in the North Sea (1893701). 10.35 Managing Schools (9317847). 11.00 The Statistician Strikes Back (8997611). 11.25 The Chemistry of Survival (6358800). 11.50 Maths (8923373). *
- 12.15 Simply Priceless (2495460).
- 12.20 Film Pat and Mike (George Cukor 1955 US). Not one of the best Spencer Tracy/Katherine Hepburn vehicles. She's the Ivy League all-round sportswoman, he's the cynical promoter who takes her on (2419199).
- 1.50 Film A Star Is Born (George Cukor 1955 US). "A terrible, fascinating orgy of self-pity and cynicism," according to the New York's Pauline Kael. Cukor's remake of the 1937 musical is always remembered for Judy Garland, although it's James Mason, as the actor she loves, who is the real presence in this backstage musical to end all backstage musicals (73277248). *
- 4.20 Best of Esther (R) (S) (437973). *
- 4.50 The Oprah Winfrey Show (7978737). *
- 5.30 TOTP2 (S) (672606).
- 6.15 2 Dance: Two by Dove. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre perform two dances choreographed by Ulysses Dove: *Vespers and Dancing on the Front Porch of Heaven* (S) (847083).
- 7.05 News and Sport; Weather (545921). *
- 7.20 Correspondent. The BBC's East Africa Correspondent Roger Hearing on John Ward's eight-year investigation into the murder of his daughter, Julie. (*Then Family Album*) (S) (151118).
- 8.05 Bookmark. See Preview, above (292625). *
- 9.00 Court TV. The USA cable station that does nothing but transmit court cases. This compilation of recent trials includes Joan Collins's recent dust-up with Random House (902606).
- 9.50 Francois Truffaut: The Man Who Loved Cinema. Charlotte Rampling narrates this tribute to the great French film director (73460).
- 10.30 Belle Epoque. 2/3. Continuing the Truffaut-scripted, posthumously produced drama (S) (58118).
- 12.00 Weatherview (6243519).
- 12.05 Film Eight Men Out Uohn Sayles 1988 US. Serious-minded recreation of the infamous 1919 Baseball World Series in which the Chicago White Sox threw games for cash. With John Cusack and Charlie Sheen (672584). *
- 2.00 Fast Forward (S) (239986).
- 2.25 Small Objects of Desire (7887328). *
- 2.45 Australian Grand Prix. Live coverage from Melbourne (80104126). To 5.05am.

ITV/London

- 6.00 GMTV 6.00 News; Weather. 6.10 Eat Your Words. 6.40 Tom and Jerry Kids. 6.45 Barney and Friends. 7.15-9.25 Saturday Disney. Matthew Crompton in the Netherlands in a houseboat (1504408).
- 9.25 Telegamemagazine. How TV weather forecasts are put together (2233282).
- 10.55 It's Not Just Saturday. Dannii and Gareth's guests are *Neighbours* starlet Melissa Bell and boy band Boyzone, pushing hard for *That's* dropped marts (S) (4187605).
- 11.30 The Chart Show (R) (S) (33151).
- 12.30 Whizz Kids. Marvel Comics' Stan Lee, creator of Spider-Man (R) (S) (53880).
- 1.00 News; Weather (54442450). *
- 1.05 Local News, Weather (54442773). *
- 1.10 Movies, Games and Videos (6427539).
- 1.45 Cartoon Time (56704242).
- 2.00 Film Carry on Cabby (Gerald Thomas 1963 UK). Hattie Jacques, neglected wife of taxi company boss Sid James, starts up a rival firm – the all-female Glancabys (721118).
- 3.45 Airilot (R) (806373).
- 4.45 News; Sport; Weather (4733248). *
- 5.05 London Tonight and Sport (191844).
- 5.20 Batman (1547248).
- 5.45 Catchphrase (S) (372731). *
- 6.15 The Shane Richie Experience. Tammy Wynette and Boyzone are the guests as three couples battle it out to get married on TV. See Preview, above (S) (841809). *
- 7.05 Barnytime (Including Lottery Result) (S) (764606). *
- 8.05 Stars in Their Eyes. People impersonate Phil Collins, Diana Carroll, bless 'em (S) (739731). *
- 8.50 News; National Lottery Update; Weather (518118). *
- 9.05 One in a Million. Philip Schofield presents stories of incredible coincidence: the lost dog that walked 100 miles to find its way home, and the wheelchair mother cured by a bolt of lightning (S) (817064). *
- 10.05 Film Moral Sins (Bradford May 1992 US). Catholic priest Christopher Reeve hears the confession of a serial killer and investigator (429915).
- 11.50 Pyjama Party. The girls' extra special guest is the pop group Sparks (S) (984606).
- 1.15 Funny Business. Spot-on Dennis Pennis and the lovely Donna McPhail (527123).
- 1.45 In Love and War (Paul Aaron 1987 US). James Woods is by far the best thing here – as the US Navy pilot downed over Hanoi and catching grief from the Cong (315786).
- 3.25 God's Gift (R) (9393861).
- 4.20 Live from London. Gary Numan wonders whether friends are electric (5256132).
- 5.05 Coach (S) (4281652). To 5.30am.

Channel 4

- 6.00 Sesame Street (R) (32083).
- 7.00 Ulysses 31 (R) (67170).
- 7.30 Super Mario Brothers (R) (8550793).
- 7.45 First Edition (5555249).
- 8.00 Trans World Sport (79828).
- 9.00 The Morning Line. Horse racing preview (72159).
- 10.00 Chinese Hustle. The allegedly vital end-of-the-season clash between Shanghai and Tianjin (26233).
- 10.30 NBA. Basketball highlights from the Houston Rockets vs the LA Lakers, with Magic Johnson (R) (49199).
- 11.00 Gazette Football Italia (62625).
- 12.00 The Late Late Show (S) (31351).
- 12.30 The Great Marathons (7255460).
- 12.55 Film Cottage to Let (Anthony Asquith 1941 UK). Comedy-thriller about a Nazi kidnap plot in the Scottish Highlands. Inventor Leslie Banks is the target. The supporting cast includes John Mills, Alastair Sim and, making his screen debut, Sir George Cole (5075905). *
- 2.35 Channel 4 Racing from Sandown. The 2.55 Barclays Bank Handicap Hurdle, the 3.30 Bent Oak and Special Car Novices' Chase, the 4.05 Sandringham Imperial Cup Handicap Hurdle, and the 4.40 H.M.S. Sandown Handicap Chase (S) (3944373).
- 5.05 Brookside Omnibus (S) (4212118). *
- 6.30 Right to Reply (S) (373). *
- 7.00 A Week in Politics (S) (5002).
- 8.00 Hidden Kingdoms. Simon Trevor's film about the life and death struggle of a family of ground hornbills in the Tsavo National Park, Kenya; was five years in the making (S) (5422).
- 9.00 Auf Wiedersehen Pet (52861). *
- 10.00 The World of Lee Evans. *Wisebloods* – and largely mirthless – sketches from the jug-eared comic (R) (S) (22170). *
- 10.35 Blue Light Zone: Subway Cops and the Mole Kings. The first programme in a season of cop-related material; sequel to sub-soft-porn *The Red Light Zone*, this documentary looks at the NYPD cops who police the 5,000 or so assorted crackheads, vagrants, the homeless and children who have settled in the sewers of Manhattan. See Preview, above (S) (571880). *
- 11.05 The Swimmers. The girls' extra special guest is the pop group Sparks (S) (984606).
- 12.05 Joyride. A motorist is hijacked and locked in his own book (R) (S) (377692).
- 12.20 Soweto Flying Squad. Another repeat in this sizzling new season, following the dangerous police work in SA's largest black township (R) (4059039). *
- 1.20 Film Rock 'n' Roll Cop (Chee Kung Wong 1994 HK). Cop pursues triad gang leader into mainland China in martial arts movie with cultural echoes for 1997-watchers (718671).
- 3.00 The Grible Show (R) (S) (9934316). To 3.50am.

ITV/Regions

- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Anwolf (7224921). 2.05 Auguest DSV (7249501). 3.50 RoboCop (50501229). 11.50 Film: Farewell to the King (20270335). 2.00pm Pyramid Party (5612501). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- WEEKS AWAYSHIRE**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 The Hampton Classic Horse Show (5240441). 1.55 Film: Charley and the Angel (7226715). 5.10 Tyne Full Time (5560525). Yorks' Scrooge (5600626). 11.05pm TV Sports Classics (42357213). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- MONMOUTHSHIRE**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Film: Condition (59657354). 2.55 All the Money That's Fit (52227228). 2.05 Welsh Brothers' Canton (2025054). 2.30 RoboCop (7223282). 3.20 Anwolf (50501229). 4.15 The Miller Touch (5312491). 5.10 Central Match – Grahame Edge (5950228). 11.45 Pyjama Party (5617331). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- NEWPORT**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Film: Condition (59657354). 2.55 All the Money That's Fit (52227228). 2.05 Welsh Brothers' Canton (2025054). 2.30 RoboCop (7223282). 3.20 Anwolf (50501229). 4.15 The Miller Touch (5312491). 5.10 Central Match – Grahame Edge (5950228). 11.45 Pyjama Party (5617331). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- REDBURN**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Film: Condition (59657354). 2.55 Knight Rider (1498977). 3.50 Anwolf (50601229). 11.50 Film: Farewell to the King (20270335). 2.00am Pyjama Party (43316551). 2.50am TV Sports Classics (5295915). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- SCOTLAND**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Film: Condition (59657354). 2.55 Knight Rider (1498977). 3.50 Anwolf (50601229). 11.50 Film: Farewell to the King (20270335). 2.00am Pyjama Party (43316551). 2.50am TV Sports Classics (5295915). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- STIRLING**
- As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53880). 1.10 Film: Condition (59657354). 2.55 Knight Rider (1498977). 3.50 Anwolf (50601229). 11.50 Film: Farewell to the King (20270335). 2.00am Pyjama Party (43316551). 2.50am TV Sports Classics (5295915). 3.25pm Funny Business (5310381). 4.10am Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon 1995 (6733981). 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- WRC**
- As CA except 11.00am The Rescuers (62625). 12.30pm Bond Stupid (7225460). 2.35 Channel 4 Racing (59444373). 3.30 Hollydays (3711700). News (915868). 7.15 Helen Y Gwydd (6282170). 8.15 Film: Stratton (6224481). 8.45 Ing Nghienh Cari (654847). 9.15 Eleven Men Against Eleven (1478335). 12.20am Soweto Flying Squad (4059039). 1.20am Film: Rock 'n' Roll Cop (0707403). 3.05-3.50am The Grible Show (7062403).

Radio



Choice
Owen Murray spearheads the advance of The Classical Accordion (3.20pm R3